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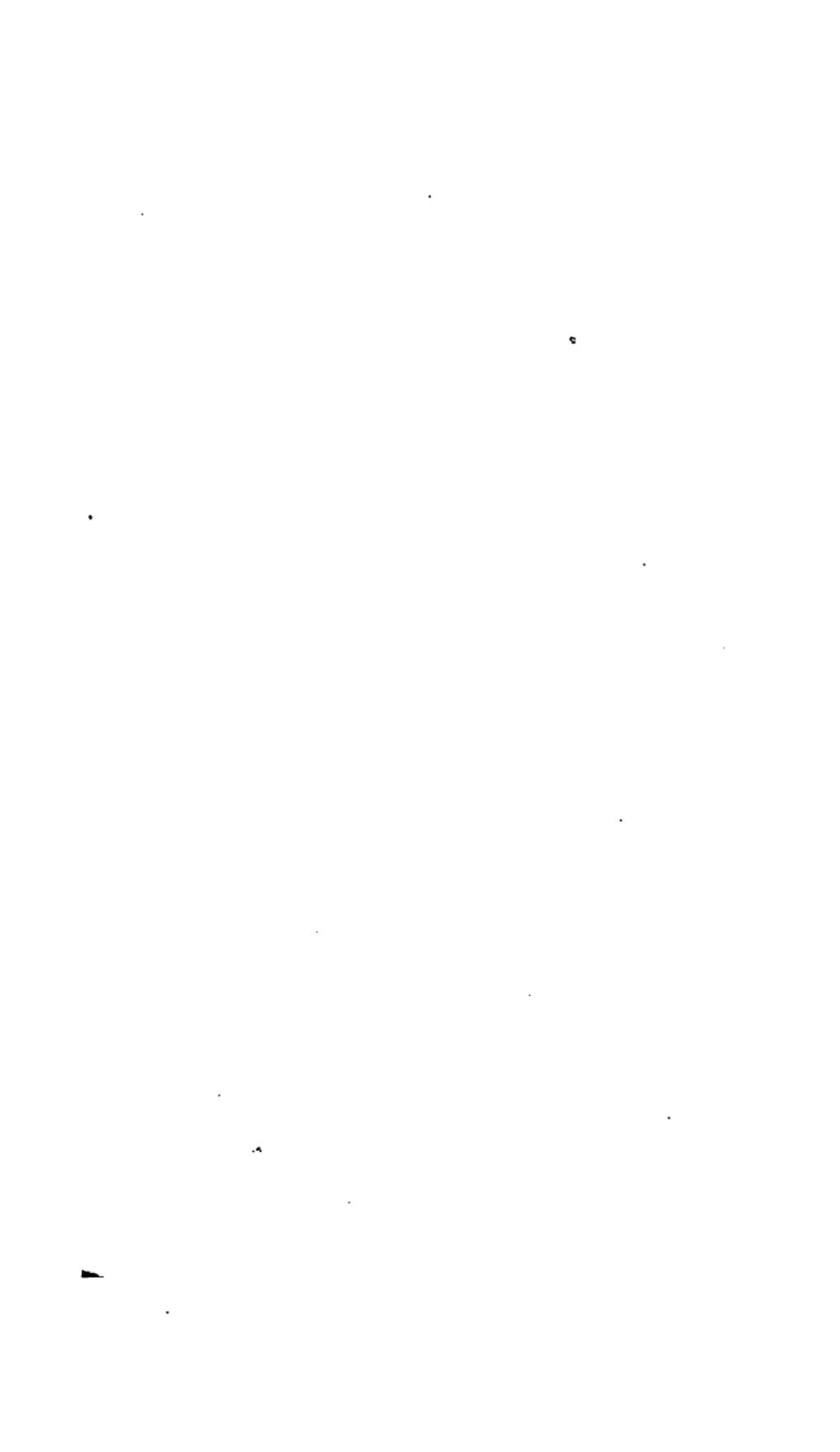


THE
INDIAN BOY
BY THE
REV. H. C. ADAMS



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BY THE
REV. H. C. ADAMS, M.A.
AUTHOR OF
“SCHOOLBOY HONOUR,” “TALES OF CHARLTON SCHOOL,” ETC.

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THE INDIAN BOY.

CHAPTER I.

BRUNSWICK HOUSE, the school at which I received my education, was situated about five miles from London, in one of the suburban villages, called Martin's Green. It was kept by one Dr. Brooksbank, a name which we irreverent youngsters used to parody as "Brickbats," in acknowledgment partly of his ponderous learning, and partly of the heaviness of the homilies, wherein he was occasionally wont to indulge. It was a large school, numbering, at times, as many as one hundred and fifty boys; and there were, of course, a great many ushers to keep them in order. But the three seniors among them were the only ones of whom we

boys took much account, the others being liable to continual flux and change, unable to endure the severe ordeal, which, on their arrival at Brunswick House, they were tolerably sure to encounter.

Mr. Rawdon, the first classical master, was a good scholar and able teacher; but a rigid martinet in and out of school, and withal somewhat pompous in his manners—a failing for which schoolboys have rarely much toleration. Very different was Mr. Winter, the second classical teacher. He was as much beloved as the other was unpopular. He was not so precise a scholar, I believe, but a man of wider and more varied information—a strict, though kind master in school; and more like one of the boys themselves, than a master, out of it. He gained in many instances a great hold on the affections of the boys, and always employed it for right ends. I have often felt in after life, that the good he did to boys' characters, was far beyond what any of us understood or suspected. As for Mr. Mayhew, the first ciphering master,

he was a good-natured, easy-going man, though apt to be roused to anger occasionally. He did his work fairly enough, but without any remarkable ability or zeal.

But it wasn't the masters that we juniors thought so much about. I was but a little fellow when I first went to school, and my extreme smallness preserved me from hard usage. The other fellows, even the greatest bullies in the school, would have been ashamed to ill-use such a scrap of humanity as I was. But I was a rare exception to the rule. Bullying is said to have been more general in such schools as Brunswick House than in others; and certainly forty or fifty years ago there was more everywhere than there is now. But any way, there was a grievous amount of it during my sojourn at Brunswick House. The juniors went through hardships, which it shocks me to remember even now; and were they to be perpetrated anew in this present day, public feeling would be roused to universal indignation.

The boys who composed the first class,

when I made my entrée there, are as fresh in my recollection as if I had made their acquaintance for the first time yesterday. There were but five of them, an unusually small number; but I have the features and figure of each one of them as clearly before me, as if their full-length portraits hung in a row over my study mantelpiece.

There was Norton, the junior of the class, a dull, heavy fellow, from whom the small boys suffered a good deal, though he could hardly be called a bully proper; following, as he always did, the lead of others. Next to him came Brackley, a good-natured, indolent boy, too fond of his own ease to bully others, unless their comfort interfered with his, in which case he was as merciless as the worst tyrant in the school. The third in the class was Joyce—the object of our particular hatred and disgust. True, he was spiteful rather than cruel; more given to tease than to hurt his schoolfellows. But there was more malice in him than in all the first class combined; and we always used to believe that he was a

coward withal. One or two old school traditions were quoted in proof of it, but whether these were true or apocryphal, I cannot say.

Frank Trevor came next—a very different style of fellow from any of the others. He was as high-spirited and open-hearted as Joyce was reserved and stealthy. He had always been too kind-tempered to bully any one; but his natural thoughtlessness had rendered him, not so much indifferent to, as unobservant of, the discomforts of others. Latterly, however, under the influence, it was believed, of Mr. Winter, he had taken a decided line in trying to put down the bullying, which was gaining great head in the school.

The last to be named was the head boy, George Dalison; and though last in mention, he was by no means last in the consideration of his schoolmates. He was the tallest and strongest boy in the school, and the best boxer besides. Much as we feared and shunned him, we could not help being proud of his exploits. Did he not administer a

tremendous thrashing to the leader of our natural enemies, the snobs—a young publican, who for some time past had been in the habit of reviling the inmates of Brunswick House: offering, for the most slender consideration, to lick any three of them? And did not Dalison, when informed of this outrageous insult, encounter this Goliath on the very next half-holiday, and with a result which made every Brunswicker's heart leap with triumph? Why, the fight was nothing but one long-continued mauling and pounding of the luckless publican, who vainly attempted to retaliate on his enemy any of the blows he so liberally received, until at last his strength, great as it was, was completely exhausted, and he was led off, a pitiable spectacle, to the shelter of the paternal tap-room. It was impossible not to be proud of a champion like this, and we would have endured any amount of hardship at his hands, if we could but have liked him. But that we could not do. He was not only cruel, but he was *coldly* cruel. It was his amusement to

see fellows suffer, and the boys hated him for it, as boys only can hate.

We used to wonder that there could be any friendship between two fellows so different as Dalison and Trevor. But they had come to Martin's Green together years before, and had been put into the same class, and had gone up the school together, learning the same lessons and getting into and out of the same scrapes; and that, you see, makes a mighty bond of union between schoolboys. Moreover, it was only during the last year that Dalison had begun to display prominently his bullying propensities, and scarcely a few months since Trevor had begun to take the opposite line. Latterly, too, the bond between them had been growing weaker and weaker, and seemed likely, ere long, to snap altogether.

One characteristic of our school was a great hankering after rank and position in society. To hear the boys talk, you would think that every one of them could boast a pedigree as long as Sir Watkin Wynn's, and as illustrious

as that of the Bourbon. In particular, they were jealously sensitive as regarded the exclusive character of Dr. Brooksbank's school. No one was ever admitted there, they were wont to affirm, who was, or ever had been, connected with trade. There were traditions current among the boys, which had descended from generation to generation, respecting wealthy citizens of London, or ironmasters in the North, who had offered the head master extraordinary sums to induce him to relax the strictness of his rule in their favour, but always without success. Not that the Bruns-wickers regarded Dr. Brooksbank as being insensible to the pecuniary allurements so held out: that was by no means their view of the matter. But they held that he was aware, if he once attempted such an outrage, the parents of his other pupils would immediately resent it by withdrawing them.

“He knows better than that!” said Charley Rivers, one of the second-class boys—the son of Major Rivers, an old Peninsular veteran,

who possessed little beyond his gentility and his half-pay—"he knows better than to attempt it. I am sure my father would take me away the next day, if Brickbats were to admit any snob into the school."

"And so would mine!" said Gore, another second-class boy, whose father was a country apothecary of somewhat limited practice, though his son always passed him off as an eminent physician.

"And mine!" struck in Heath, who had his own reasons for always speaking of his respected parent as "Captain Heath," leaving it to be inferred that he held that rank in the Royal Navy; instead of being, what he was, captain and part owner of a merchantman trading with Demerara.

"And mine!" added Stapleton, the last of the group, and the one whose authority on such matters was held to be the gravest of any, seeing that he was the son of no less a personage than one of his Majesty's judges. "No, depend upon it, Brooksbank will never attempt that—it would ruin his school if he did."

Yet, notwithstanding the confidence with which these assertions were made, it was curious to observe the uneasy feeling lurking in the minds of the boys, lest the head master should allow the lust of gain, after all, to prevail over his sense of duty, and induce him to overstep the prescribed limits. New boys were invariably subjected to a strict scrutiny as to their origin and antecedents, and lay under a species of social quarantine until the public mind had been fully satisfied on the subject. James Stapleton himself, whose authority, as has just been remarked, was now received with so much reverence on such matters, had been for some time the object of general suspicion in his first half-year at Martin's Green. His father, a distinguished barrister, who afterwards attained to the dignity of Chief Baron of the Exchequer, had been promoted to the Common Serjeantcy just before Stapleton's arrival; and his son, who had heard a good deal on the subject at home, was much impressed by the dignity of his parent's newly-acquired title. When,

therefore, he was interrogated in the play-ground at his first appearance, according to the usual formula—

"I say, you new fellow, what is your name, and what is your father?" he replied, promptly—

"If you please, my name is Stapleton, and my father is Common Serjeant."

"A common serjeant!" exclaimed Brackley, by whom the question had been asked, in mingled astonishment and disgust, "you don't mean that, young'un, to be sure! Here, I say, you fellows, Nicolls, Jacobson, Dalison, Joyce—what do you think this new chap says? He told me his father was a common serjeant!"

"A common serjeant!" exclaimed Trevor—the son, by the way, of an old Indian general, who had lately returned, full of rupees and liver complaint, after fifty years' broiling in the Presidencies—his thoughts reverting to the non-commissioned officers of his father's regiment, whom he had often seen pipeclayeing their belts, or rubbing

down their horses in the barrack-yard—"that must be his gammon; Brickbats would never venture to let him come here, you know."

"A common serjeant!" reiterated the others, as the image of the ancient veteran who came every Saturday to drill the junior boys presented itself to their imaginations. "It's impossible! quite impossible! You must have made some mistake, you fellow, haven't you?"

"No, I haven't!" retorted the new-comer, angrily; "he was promoted only a few weeks ago. I wonder you did not hear of it. And my mamma is very proud of it, I can tell you, and so am I. He was a serjeant before; but he will rank above all the serjeants now—I heard mamma herself say so." "I never heard such a thing in all my life!" exclaimed Trevor. "I wonder what things are coming to! I wonder whether Brickbats will expect us to associate with a chimney-sweep next!"

"I don't want to associate with you, I am sure!" said Stapleton, his face growing fiery

red with indignation at this innuendo ; “ I don’t believe your fathers are any of them better than mine, if as good ; and I believe it is all envy and jealousy—that is more. I feel quite as contemptible as you do, I assure you.” So saying, the new boy withdrew himself, like Ajax in the infernal regions, into impenetrable silence. The boys conferred among themselves, after his departure, as to the course which it would be incumbent on them to pursue under such unprecedented circumstances. Would a general sending to Coventry of the audacious intruder suffice to vindicate the character of the school ? Hardly, it was thought. “ If he had been a serjeant once, and had had a commission given him, as happened to a fellow in my father’s regiment,” remarked Trevor, “ it would have been a different thing ; though, no doubt, it would have been bad enough even then. But as it is, a mere refusal to keep company with the fellow—that would not be half enough.”

“ Well,” said Brackley, “ what do you think of a round-robin to Brickbats, saying

that we are sure he must have admitted him by mistake, and will send him away again, as soon as he has heard the truth?"

"He would flog us all round!" said Dalison.

"No, he wouldn't!" interposed Heath. "I would write to my father, and tell him about it, if Brickbats attempted that."

"He would flog you before you could get an answer," returned Dalison.

"Ah, to be sure," said Heath, unable to parry this thrust, "he might do that. We had better send the round-robin without putting our names to it."

"What! an anonymous letter, eh?" said Trevor. "No, I won't have anything to do with anonymous letters. My father says no gentleman ever writes them. There must be some name to it."

"Well, then, I tell you what we can do," suggested Brackley; "one of us can sign it, in behalf of the others. I know my father often does that when he is the chairman of the magistrates at the Quarter Sessions, or of

any public meeting. I have seen him sign his name, ‘J. Brackley, Chairman, in behalf of the meeting.’ ”

“That is a very good idea,” said Dalison. “We will call a meeting of the head forms in the school, and, as you understand more about how it ought to be managed than any of us do, I propose that you shall be chairman.”

“That would do famously!” said Joyce. “Don’t you think so?” he added, turning to the other boys.

“Nothing could be better, I think,” said Nicolls.

“Nothing,” repeated Jacobson.

“It is a capital thought,” said Trevor.

“Capital! capital!” was the general cry.

“Thank you, Joyce,” said Brackley, rather hastily interposing to put a stop to the general enthusiasm, “but I don’t think I am at all qualified for the office, or else I should of course be willing to undertake it. It ought to be one of the head boys of the school—Jacobson, or Nicolls, or Trevor, or Dalison. It would be great cheek for me to put myself

in such a position above all the first-class fellows."

"Why, you see," observed Jacobson, in answer to this suggestion, "Nicolls and I are going to leave so soon, that it scarcely signifies to us. Dalison, or Trevor, or Joyce would make a much more suitable chairman under the circumstances; otherwise, I need not say, I should be quite willing."

"I am unluckily very much out of favour with Brickbats just now," said Dalison. "He would regard anything I did of that kind with great prejudice, so that I should be a very unwise selection."

"And I am quite out of favour with him too," said Trevor.

"And so am I," added Joyce; and so said the others.

The office having been modestly declined by every one present, the proposal fell to the ground, and a variety of expedients were suggested in its place. The boys were still hesitating between a joint reference of the affair to their parents and a general barring

out, when their attention was happily diverted by the approach of John Woodley, a former pupil of Dr. Brooksbank, who occasionally rode down from London on half-holidays during the summer months, to take part in the boys' games. To him, as to a "Deus ex machinâ," the knotty question was referred. A hearty fit of laughter, which somewhat abashed his questioners, was the result. Woodley had been recently called to the common-law bar, and, as it chanced, had sometimes practised in the Common Serjeant's Court. Their mistake, therefore, was at once explained to the boys; Stapleton was recalled from his self-imposed banishment, and elevated to a high position of honour, as much exceeding the consideration really due to his father's station in society, as the previous estimate had fallen short of it. But boys never do things by halves; and during the remainder of Stapleton's stay in the school, nice points of precedence in respect of rank between the parents of the different boys, were always submitted to him, as to a Court

of Appeal, whose decisions were accepted as final.

Such being the state of feeling at Brunswick House, the reader may picture to himself the mingled amazement and wrath which took possession of the popular mind, when it was announced that the Doctor had actually admitted a black boy into the school. “A black boy—a downright nigger!” so reported Billy Waters—that was Stapleton’s nickname, you know—who happened to be in the parlour, undergoing some strictures of Mrs. Brooksbank relative to certain breakages of windows, when the new pupil arrived. At first, the boys were altogether incredulous as to the advent of any new boy at all, affirming that Billy, whose fondness for hoaxing was notorious, had altogether invented the occurrence. When at length the earnestness of his asseverations dispelled this idea, it was next suggested that he must be mistaken in supposing the individual in question to be black.

“Perhaps he had a black handkerchief

tied over his face, to keep off the cold," said one.

"More likely the lady who brought him had a black page, and you mistook him for the new fellow," insinuated another.

"Are you sure you saw his face at all?" inquired a third. "Perhaps he had black gloves and stockings on, and that made you think he was all black."

Billy endured the storm of objections manfully, and persisted in it that he had seen the boy's face; that he hadn't anything wrapped round it; that it was the new pupil, and not a black page; and, lastly, that the boy, whoever he was, was not black in the face from coughing, as somebody had propounded, in despair of any better solution. The new boy hadn't any cough at all—at least, he hadn't heard him cough. He was a genuine nigger, as black as his hat, and so the boys would find.

In the midst of this Babel of conjectures and comments, the door opened, and Billy's veracity was vindicated to a considerable

extent, if not entirely, by the entrance of the head master, leading a short, punchy little fellow, apparently about twelve years of age, whose complexion, if it was not actually as black as Billy's hat (a very rusty old beaver, by the by, Judge Stapleton, not unreasonably, having declined, some months before, to purchase an infinite series of new hats, which became invariably good for nothing after a fortnight's wear), was nevertheless many shades deeper in dye than a copper kettle.

"Boys," began the Doctor, in his most sonorous tones, "I bring you a new scholar and playmate"—that was his regular commencement, you know—"in whose behalf I particularly request your kindness and friendly offices. He is"—here the speaker paused a moment, as though he felt a slight embarrassment as to the best mode of expressing his meaning—"he is a foreigner, you may perceive!" [“A regular nigger!” muttered Billy, half audibly, so that Brickbats caught the words, though fortunately

he did not discover who had spoken]—"a foreigner, and as such more than commonly entitled to your generosity and forbearance. His father is a person of—of high rank in his own country"—"Overseer to a Yankee nigger-driver!" again suggested the incorrigible Waters; but, unluckily for him, this time the Doctor heard him plainly, and turning sharply round, caught him a ringing box on the ear, which propelled him in a slanting direction, like a billiard-ball, against Heath, from whom he cannoned off against Robinson; and all three boys coming into contact with a form, rolled over on the ground together. Brickbats contemplated the result of his stroke complacently: he felt that his dignity had been avenged, and withdrew in peace.

I am afraid that his exhortations to forbearance produced but little effect. The door had scarcely closed behind his portly person, ere the boys had crowded round the unfortunate stranger, plying him with questions innumerable, to which, either from inability

or unwillingness, or perhaps the two combined, he made but brief answers, and those such as his hearers had scarcely expected. He came from a place a long way off; it had taken a long time, a great many months, to come to this country, and he did not much like it now he had come to it. His mother was not a Hottentot, but an English lady, and his father was Rajah of Jesselpoor—that was more; and his mother was not black, but as white as any of us, and her name was Johnstone—Mrs. Johnstone—and his name was Arthur Johnstone, and he would be obliged to us not to call him “nigger,” nor yet “you fellow!” He hadn’t been used to be called anything of the kind—he was used to be called “Sahib” or “your Highness,” and he would thank us to call him so too.

I reckon he was sorry before long that he had made that request; which I need not say was most scrupulously complied with. He was “Sahibed,” and “Rajahed,” and “your Highnessed,” on all occasions, until he would have given every stiver of his pocket-money,

though he wasn't over-fond of parting with it, if those words could be expunged from the English language. As Nicolls remarked, who was the best classical scholar among us, it might be counted as one of the "vota numinibus exaudita malignis."

There was, in truth, a good deal more in the new-comer's manner to attract the practical joking of the boys than is ordinarily the case. His total ignorance of English habits, his strange appearance, and mode of expressing himself; above all, the violent fits of passion into which ridicule or rough usage rarely failed to rouse him, were strong temptations to his schoolfellows to amuse themselves at his expense, when they found the time hang heavily on their hands, as was not unfrequently the case.

I remember a scene of this kind occurring, a few weeks after Arthur's arrival at the school. It was the day on which the cricket subscription for the season was collected, and a junior boy had gone round by order of the treasurer—that was Norton—to get the

money in. It was paid without demur by the boys, who had no inclination to resist a demand sanctioned by long usage, and trifling in amount, and who were further aware that if they did refuse, they would not only be compelled by Norton to pay, but would receive a receipt from him of a kind by no means to be desired. The new-comer alone had rebelled against the order; nor could argument, threat, or entreaty produce any effect upon him. The emissary at last, tired out and disgusted, was obliged to return to his principal, with the information that "Sahib" had flatly refused to pay any portion of the impost.

After his departure, the coterie of small boys, who had witnessed the interview with a mixture of awe and astonishment, began to question Arthur about it.

"I say, Sahib, do you really mean you won't pay the cricket money?" asked Stevens.

"Yes, I do," replied Arthur.

"Why not?"

"Because I don't choose."

"And why don't you choose?" said Ellis, taking up the inquiry.

"I don't want to play cricket."

"That's no reason, Rajah," struck in Webber. "A great many of the fellows don't play cricket, but they all pay the subscription."

To this remark, which was not put in the form of a question, Arthur made no reply.

"I say," said Ellis, recommencing the discussion, and importing a new topic into it, "you'll find you'd better pay it. You'll get no end of a thrashing, if you don't."

"I don't care," said Arthur, "if I do. I won't pay it any the more."

"The fellows will all send you to Coventry; none of them will speak to you, that is to say, if you refuse," urged Stevens.

"I don't want them to speak to me," returned the impenetrable Arthur.

There was another silence; and then the youngsters, perceiving that they had a young

Yahoo to deal with, who was insensible to all considerations of civilized life, began to assail him with weapons of a different description.

"I'll tell you," cried Webber, "why Sahib won't pay the cricket money."

"Why?" asked another.

"He is saving up all his money to buy a bottle of Rowlands' Kalydor to wash himself white."

"No, that is not it," exclaimed Stevens, noticing the dark flush of passion which this taunt called into the boy's face; "that's not it. He is saving up his money to buy a brown wig and spectacles, for fear his master the nigger-driver should come after him, and find him out."

"Or, perhaps," said Ellis, "he wants to buy his freedom. How much does your master ask, Sahib—how much, eh?"

"How much, how much?" repeated the remorseless tormentors, dancing round him like the picadors at a Spanish bull-fight, jostling him from behind, twitching his hair, pinching his legs; always keeping carefully

out of his reach, and singing as they buzzed round and round him the old rhyme, where-with many and many an unlucky wight had been saluted before him,—

Passion, Passion, take advice,
Fill your pockets full of rice ;
When the rice begins to crawl,
Take a spoon and eat it all.

Johnstone's face grew darker and darker with fury, as the shafts of his assailants fell thick about him. Suddenly, with a spring like that of a wild beast, he threw himself upon Tom Dickinson, who chanced at the moment to be nearest to him, fastening on his throat with his teeth and nails, to the sore detriment of poor Tommy, who would have sustained serious injury had it not been for Frank Trevor's interposition. The latter had witnessed the skirmish from the schoolroom window, and now came forth to put a period to it. With some difficulty he disengaged Arthur from his antagonist, and led him, still panting and quivering in every limb, to his

own desk in the corner of the schoolroom, whence he did not reappear until prayer-time that evening.

Now, mind, I am not going to defend this kind of thing in schools. I have elsewhere spoken of the evils of bullying—that is, of the hardship and suffering inflicted by bigger boys on their juniors. The kind of petty badgering falling short of this, but still tending to render their schoolfellows very unhappy, is, in my judgment, almost as grave a mischief. I know that it is urged by many that it is often a cure, and sometimes the only real cure, for affectation, and sulkiness, and morbid sensitiveness, and many other boyish faults. But, as was remarked in the other instance, though it may be sometimes a good thing for those who undergo it, it is always a bad thing for those who inflict it. To get into the way of looking out for the weak points of people's characters, in order to amuse ourselves with them, is about as mischievous an occupation as man or boy can find for himself. Many a one has failed in life who would other-

wise have been signally successful but for having acquired the habit in his school-days ; and, what is worse, many a noble Christian character has been fatally stunted in its growth by reason of it.

Frank Trevor had interposed to protect Arthur against his small persecutors, as he had of late done once or twice before in the instance of other boys. He had resolved to keep in mind the recollection of the conversations which Mr. Winter had had with him, and the determination which he had formed in consequence of them. But he had already found out that he had undertaken no easy office ; and Mr. Winter had given him some wise advice about it. "I don't want you to lecture the boys about bullying, Frank," he had said ; "that isn't your business, and probably you would not do it with much effect, if you were to try it. But you may prevent a great deal by a little judicious management. A word here and there, spoken good-naturedly, will generally stop anything of the sort ; and if anything more serious is attempted, say

quietly you won't allow it to be done. If the boys know that you mean what you say, that will be in general quite enough."

Trevor pondered over this advice after the other boys had gone up to bed that evening. Here was just such a case as Mr. Winter would like him to take up, but it was one in which he felt particularly reluctant to meddle. Arthur Johnstone was a most unpromising subject to befriend. He would scarcely ever make any answer to questions put to him, even when there was no incivility in the asking. He fought shy of all the boys alike, whether they were in the habit of worrying him or not, and if any one pressed himself upon him, he ran the chance of getting it sharpish over the shins ; for the boy kicked like a Cornishman, on the slightest provocation. This was not encouraging in itself, but there was another reason which rendered Trevor still more unwilling to interfere : this was, that he felt it would bring him into collision, not only with Joyce, who was for ever worrying Arthur, but probably with

Dalison also. For the former he had no liking, certainly, though they were old acquaintances, and were thrown much together. With Dalison, however, he was very intimate. Many small ties such as have already been specified kept them together, and boys are always reluctant to break these. He felt strongly inclined to throw Arthur overboard as he reflected thus, but could not make up his mind to his own satisfaction. At length he remembered that it was getting too late for him to remain in the schoolroom, or he would not be in bed by the required time. Hastily determining, therefore, to be guided by circumstances as regarded his future dealings with little Johnstone, he went upstairs to bed.

CHAPTER II.

THE half-hour or so which intervened between prayers and the arrival of Mrs. Brooksbank, or her deputy, to take away the candle, was one generally dedicated to mischief of some kind. Sometimes it was a bolstering-match, either a single combat or a general *mélée*; sometimes an extempore dance, Sir Roger de Coverley being usually selected. On these occasions the gentlemen appeared in their ordinary attire (minus the shoes, which would have raised such a clatter over the Doctor's head as would have brought even him upstairs to see what was the matter); and the *costume de bal* of the ladies consisted of night-gowns, put on over their other apparel, and fastened round the waist with a neckerchief or comforter, by way of sash; while the orchestra was represented by a boy playing on a Jew's

harp, or failing that instrument, a comb wrapped in silver paper. When neither "tourney nor dance" had sufficient attraction for the boys, they commonly took to teasing one another; and this mode of passing the time was more frequent in Dalison's room than in any of the others: he being much given, as has been already intimated, to that species of capricious petty tyranny which boys call "bullying."

On the present occasion the popular fancy inclined to this method of diversion, Arthur Johnstone being fastened upon by general consent as the victim. Dickinson and his sympathizers were clamorous for vengeance on the perpetrator of the assault, the marks of which were still distinctly visible on the boy's chin and throat. Norton, who had no opportunity of having it out with him respecting his refusal to pay the cricket subscription, was desirous of selecting the present opportunity as the fittest for that purpose. Joyce, too, had a secret grudge, which he wished to gratify, though he did not openly allege it.

There was a junior boy in the same class with Arthur, whose timid demeanour and an occasional stuttering in his speech, when more than usually nervous, made him a favourite butt for Joyce's idle half-hours. A kind of fellow-feeling had sprung up between these two outcasts; and that morning Arthur had contrived, with more dexterity than any one would have given him credit for, to deliver his fellow-sufferer from his tyrant's clutches.

Joyce was amusing himself, after a frequent fashion of his, by making Gray repeat a string of words beginning with the letter W; and every time he stuck fast, which was on an average at every third word, he helped him through the difficulty by driving a kind of spur, composed of three long pins fastened to a stick, into some sensitive part of his body. The shock so administered generally released the imprisoned syllable from its bonds, much to the diversion of Joyce, but sorely to the injury of the sufferer, whose arms and legs were tattooed like those of a New Zealander by the oft-repeated process.



As the elder boy was engaged in this Domitian-like entertainment that morning, he had chanced to seat himself with his back to the bookcase containing the school lending library. Arthur, who had watched the scene for a quarter of an hour with considerable, though useless, indignation, had suddenly conceived a bright thought. Going silently out of the schoolroom, he had tapped at Mr. Winter's door, and begged him to lend him a book, the only copy of which he knew to be in the school library. Mr. Winter, in reply, had offered him his key of the school cupboard, to get the book in question out. But on Arthur's replying that he was unable to open the lock himself, the usher had good-naturedly gone into the schoolroom to unlock the door for him. As Joyce's back was turned to the bookcase, and he had no expectation that any of the masters would come in at that hour, he continued his torture of Gray for some little time after Mr. Winter's entrance; when the sound of the usher's voice caused him to turn

round. The former had apprehended, but imperfectly, what was passing ; but his eye was fixed upon Joyce with an expression which made him turn first red, and then white, and, lastly, hastily get up and leave the school-room. He noticed, however, Arthur's expression of satisfaction at the success of his manœuvre; and at once divining the stratagem that had been employed, resolved that it should cost its contriver dear.

No sooner, therefore, had the boys assembled in their bedrooms, than he adroitly turned the conversation to the subject of the cricket subscription. It will be remembered that he had not been present when the money had been refused, and had only heard the circumstances from popular rumour, so that his question did not seem to have any direct reference to Arthur.

“Norton,” he said, “when are the new cricket things going to be ordered? It is quite time. The weather was almost warm enough for a game to-day; and the old stock has run very short. I was looking it up

yesterday morning. We must have a new batch of things before we shall be able to have a match at all."

"I would send for it at once," replied Norton. "I meant to have sent for it to-day, but I have not got all the money yet."

"Not got the money!" exclaimed Joyce, in affected surprise; "why, there are as many fellows as usual in the school this half-year, are there not?"

"Yes, but some of the fellows can't pay all the money; and one won't pay at all."

"Won't pay at all! Who is he, I wonder? A fellow ought to be tossed in a blanket, in my opinion, who refuses to pay the cricket money. That is the way we served a fellow five years ago, who wouldn't pay it, I remember."

"Hear, hear!" said Robinson. "Who are the defaulters?"

"Willett, Saunders, and Dusautoy say they will pay as soon as they hear from home. Henderson has paid half; one or two others are a shilling short. Rajah Sahib is the one

who says he won't pay at all," returned Norton. "I can't order all we want, until we have got all the money in."

"Rajah Sahib won't pay at all, do you say?" asked Joyce.

"No, he won't pay," repeated Norton. "Here he is himself. I say, why won't you pay, you young snob?"

Arthur screwed up his face into its most obstinate expression, but made no reply.

"Answer, will you!" said Joyce, "or I will shy this boot at your head."

"Answer, answer!" chorused a dozen voices.

"Toss him in the blanket, as some one suggested just now," exclaimed Robinson.

"Do, do! that will just serve him right," cried Rivers. "Now then, my lads, off with the blanket, and in with Sahib."

"Hurrah!" shouted the boys, always ready for this species of entertainment, and feeling the special justice of it in this instance. A blanket was soon torn from Arthur's bed; himself chucked into it, in spite of his

struggles, in the course of which he bestowed one or two heavy kicks on his assailants' shins; and in two minutes more he was flying up to the ceiling, *secundum artem*, under the vigorous efforts of his persecutors.

While the hubbub was at its height, the door suddenly opened, and Trevor entered. He was on his way to his own bed, still pondering over the difficult problem which, it might be said, Mr. Winter had given him to solve; and hearing the disturbance in Dalison's room, had looked in, to see what was the matter. His entrance startled some of the boys, who, imagining that Mrs. Brooksbank had come upon them unawares, released their hold on the blanket; and the living shuttlecock flew off in a slanting direction, alighting breathless and enraged, but happily uninjured, on one of the beds.

"Up with him again," shouted the boys, as soon as they perceived that the alarm was groundless. "Up with him again. He hasn't had half enough yet!"

"Will you pay the cricket money, you

young wretch?" asked Joyce. "Say you will this minute, or I will pitch you into the blanket again, and no mistake about it."

"No!" roared Arthur. "I won't pay a sixpence, not if you kill me for it; I won't, I tell you! Let me alone!" he bellowed, as the boys again seized hold of him. "Let me alone, I say!" struggling as he spoke with such energy as to enable him to break loose from his captors, and fling himself at Trevor's feet, which he clasped with frantic eagerness.

"Oh, Trevor! don't let them!" he exclaimed. "You are kinder to me than the rest. Don't let them drive me mad in this way! They are all bullies in this room. Don't let them, pray!"

Frank could not help being moved by this appeal. With the recollection of Mr. Winter's injunction still fresh in his mind, he felt it to be impossible to resist it.

"Come, I think he has had enough, has he not?" he asked, looking round him, and glancing more particularly at Dalison, who had sat throughout the scene on the end of

his bed, watching what was passing, but taking no part in it. "I wouldn't toss him a second time, if I were you. He might be really damaged."

Trevor was popular with the boys; and, besides, an appeal to their mercy rarely failed to soften them.

"Well, I don't mind letting him off now, if the others don't," said Rivers.

"I don't want to toss him again, so far as I am concerned," added Robinson.

"Let him pay the cricket money, and I have no objection," observed Joyce, rather stiffly, for he was annoyed at Trevor's interference.

"But that is just what he won't do," cried Norton.

"Well, then, I am for tossing him again till he does," said Joyce. "I am for tossing the sulks out of him, whatever Trevor may think about it."

Trevor bent over Arthur. "Would you mind giving me the money?" he asked, in a low voice.

"No," answered Arthur in the same tone, after a moment's hesitation. "I will give it you, though I would not to a bully like Joyce."

"There," said Trevor, turning round to the others, "he has promised to pay the money; so you will let him off now, as a favour to me, won't you?"

"To be sure! By all means! Certainly!" was the cry from all sides. Joyce alone did not join in it.

"I overheard what he said, Trevor," he remarked angrily, when the others were quiet, "and I have a good mind to give him something for his impudence which he will like still less than being tossed in the blanket. I don't know what business you have to come in here, interfering with our room. But if you do choose to take this young snob up, you had better advise him to give me no more of his sauce, or he may find your protection won't prevent him from getting his deserts."

"Won't it?" retorted Trevor, provoked at Joyce's language. "We'll see about that

when the time comes. As it is, I don't see what right you have to make a row. Dalison, and not you, is the head boy in this room, and if he doesn't object to my coming in here, you have no right to. And as for what Arthur said, he didn't mean you to hear it, so it was no impudence, that I can see."

Joyce, who was much irritated, would have replied in the same strain, but at this moment Mrs. Brooksbank's step was heard, as she slowly ascended the stairs, and the alarm was instantly given. Trevor vanished through the opposite door; the boys flew right and left to their beds; trousers and stockings were peeled off with the rapidity of a pantomimic change; and when the old lady entered the room, every boy was not only in his bed, but wrapped apparently in the serenest slumber.

Well, that was the beginning of Trevor's patronage of little Johnstone. You see it was in a measure forced upon him, after what Joyce had said, even if his mind had not already been made up on the subject. Arthur

was removed at his request to the desk next to his in school, and into his room instead of Dalison's. It made a great difference to the boy every way. Frank helped him in his school work, so much that he got on very tolerably with the ushers, instead of being in continual disgrace; and the boys gave up their hitherto constant practice of bullying him—partly out of regard for Trevor, and partly because he did not any longer exhibit such violent outbursts of anger as he had been used to indulge in. All might have gone well but for Joyce, who never forgave him. He was a good hater, and took care that Arthur should suffer severely for the vexation he had sustained through him. Nor was Dalison better pleased, though he repressed for the present his displeasure. If Mrs. Brooksbank's entrance on the night of the blanket-tossing had not put a stop to the quarrel, he would have answered Frank in a manner which would probably have made an open breach between them. As it was, a hollow show of friendliness was still main-



tained; but each had an instinctive feeling that something would in all likelihood occur before long to interrupt it.

Such proved to be the case. One afternoon, about a month before the close of the half-year, a group of four were engaged in practising bowling and batting, preparatory to a great match to be played shortly with the Martin's Green Eleven. The four players were Dalison, Gore, Heath, and Joyce; the two former bowling, and the other two handling the bat. Half a dozen or more juniors had been impressed to watch out. Amongst others, a boy named Simpson, and Arthur Johnstone, had been obliged to act as the two long-stops behind the wickets. Something had that morning occurred which did not tend to the improvement of Dalison's temper. This was the information contained in a letter from his father, that he had applied to General Trevor, asking his influence to obtain a writership in the East India Company's service, in preference to the promise of a cadetship, which was all that he had

hitherto been able to secure for his son. But the interview with the general had not fulfilled his anticipations. Mr. Dalison knew that Sir Henry Trevor had invited a large party of young people, as usual, to pass a fortnight at his country seat during the holidays; but he had not extended the invitation this time to George. He had further spoken rather coldly and doubtfully as to his ability (that is, according to Mr. Dalison's view of the matter, his willingness) to push George's interest. He half suspected, he said, that some coldness must have arisen between young Frank Trevor and his son. But he meant to make another trial next week, before the appointment he was asking for had been given away. In the meantime, if there had been any quarrel with Trevor, his son must by all means make it up without delay. Dalison was a good deal provoked by this letter. He was too acute not to know that any overtures addressed to Frank, under the circumstances, would be more likely to provoke his quondam friend's contempt than his goodwill. His best chance of success,

he felt, would be to leave things altogether alone, and trust to his not injuring his cause at all events, if he did not assist it. He would know the issue of his father's second appeal to the general in a few days ; and if the latter *did* altogether refuse—why, Trevor would perhaps find out that he had learned the fact.

But though he kept his thoughts carefully to himself, his secret dissatisfaction showed itself in very evident outward symptoms. His style of bowling was always swift, but he bowled that day faster than usual, and got provoked that the long-stop repeatedly let the balls by. Simpson was, in truth, not much experienced in long-stopping, and the bowling was so rapid and irregular, that a much older and better player might have been pardoned for failing to stop it. Dalison at first went no further than abuse and a cuff or two, when one or two balls in succession slipped through the boy's fingers ; but his temper was more and more roused as every successive ball was missed, and at length, calling Simpson up, he

gave him several sharp boxes on the ear, and desired Arthur Johnstone to change places with him. This arrangement, however, did not tend to soothe Dalison's irritation. Arthur was sulky in the first instance at being obliged to watch out against his will, and still more sulky at being obliged to change the easier post for the more difficult. He soon grew superlatively sulky at the angry objurgations which Dalison now transferred to him whenever he failed in stopping his balls. At last he broke out into one of his fits of passion, such as he had not indulged in for several weeks past, and declared that let Dalison say what he might, he couldn't stop the balls, and it was of no use his trying.

"Sulky little brute!" said Joyce, as he witnessed this outbreak, "I'll soon cure him, if you leave him to me, Dalison. Just bowl a little to leg, and I'll send him a ball or two, which he will have some excuse for not stopping."

Dalison complied, and Joyce hitting sharp

round to leg, struck two or three balls with all his force, which narrowly missed Arthur. Dalison and Heath laughed as they watched the effect of this proceeding on the young Indian; who, immovable as he was on most occasions, was fairly frightened by the force and noise with which the balls flew past him, and which, if they had struck him on the temple, would not improbably have killed him.

"I say," whispered Gore, who was standing close to Joyce's wicket, "hadn't you better mind you don't really hit him? There'd be an awful row if he was seriously damaged. And, by Jove, here is this nigger's friend, Trevor, coming up. He will kick up a row, as sure as fate, if he sees it."

"I don't care what Trevor says, or does either!" returned Joyce, angrily. "I have a right to hit round, haven't I, if Dalison bowls leg-balls? I can't help it, if this young stupid won't stop them, or get out of the way. Bowl away, Gore, and don't trouble

yourself about me—I'll manage all that, you may rely on it."

Gore shrugged his shoulders and went on with the game; and presently Trevor, who was returning from his walk, came up, and stood still awhile to watch the practice. He did not appear at first to perceive what was going on; and it was not until one or two balls had passed close to Arthur's person, one of which indeed struck him, though very slightly, on the thigh, that he called out to Arthur to move farther off.

"You are too near, Arthur," he said. "If Joyce is practising hitting round in that way, you ought to be farther off. You might be hurt very much there."

Arthur was only too glad to comply, and was moving back, when Joyce called him to stop.

"I say, you young villain, if you don't stay where you are, I'll come and knock your head off with this bat."

"You will knock his head off with that *ball*,

I expect," said Trevor, "if he does stay where he is. He ought not to be placed there, Joyce, and you know it."

"What business is it of yours?" returned Joyce. "You are always meddling with what doesn't concern you. This fellow is fagging out for us, and not for you. He shall stand where we please."

"Where *you* please, I suppose you mean!" said Trevor. "No one would think of putting a little fellow like him so near the wicket, and cutting those slashing balls round at him, but you. You have no right to do it, and you sha'n't. Arthur, move ten yards farther back. I will take care he sha'n't thrash you for doing it."

"Take that, at all events!" shouted Joyce, striking round again as he spoke, and this time with a more successful aim.

The ball struck the boy between the shoulders as, in compliance with Trevor's directions, he was moving farther off, and brought him to the ground like a ninepin.

Trevor ran and picked Arthur up, who was much bruised and in great pain. He was immediately joined by Gore, who, though by no means blameless as regards the article of bullying himself, was shocked at so extreme a piece of brutality.

"Joyce is a horrid beast, I must admit," he said. "It is a shame to bully fellows as he does. Shall I help you to take him indoors?"

"Thank you, Gore," said Trevor. "If you will be so kind as to see him safe inside the house, and take him to Mrs. Brooksbank, that will do. He can walk by himself, though not very well. I should like to go and have this out with Joyce."

So saying, he turned round and walked up to the latter, who, somewhat disturbed by the success of his last hit, though not at all penitent, had now joined Dalison and Heath at the farther wicket.

"Joyce," he said abruptly, "I wish you to understand, once and for all, that I won't

have you bully little Johnstone in the way you have been doing for the last two or three weeks. I am determined to prevent it."

"Indeed!" returned Joyce, emboldened by the presence of Dalison. "And pray how will you prevent it?"

"If you attempt to thrash him again, I shall interpose to stop you."

"In fact, you mean you will try to thrash me, if I do?"

"Well, yes!" returned Trevor. "I don't wish anything of the kind, unless you force it on me. But I *will* try it, sooner than allow him to be bullied in that disgraceful manner."

"I don't know what right you have to say that Dalison and I were bullying him disgracefully."

He looked appealingly at his ally as he spoke, but to his surprise and discomfiture Dalison only replied,—

"You had better not bring in my name,

if you please. I don't wish to have anything to do with this business."

"Nor do I wish to mix you up with it, George," said Trevor. "It was Joyce whom I saw slashing round at him, and trying to knock him over if he could; and it is only Joyce with whom I am concerned."

"Very well!" said Joyce, sulkily, "I am sure I wish to have as little to do with you, as you can with me. As for young Johnstone, it will be time enough for you to talk of interfering in his behalf when I do anything to justify it. He is the most impudent young snob in the school; and if he is impudent to me, I shall lick him, whether you like it or not."

And so saying, Joyce retired towards the house, covering his retreat, or we may say his defeat, as well as he was able. The other boys followed more slowly, Dalison rather cool and silent, and thinking to himself that if it had not been for his father's letter, it would have afforded him very particular satisfaction to have taken down Trevor's insolence

(or what he considered his insolence) a peg or two ; and that not impossibly, before many days had past, he would have the satisfaction he desired.

CHAPTER III.

A S Gore entered the house, partly leading and partly supporting Arthur Johnstone, they encountered Mr. Mayhew, who was setting out for an evening walk. This master I have described as being neither so severe as Mr. Rawdon, nor so considerate as Mr. Winter, and holding in consequence a sort of middle place in the boys' regard. He seldom took notice of what passed out of school hours; partly, no doubt, because he did not wish to give himself more trouble than he was obliged to take; and partly, we must add in fairness to him, because he really believed that interference during their play-hours was generally unwise. He was about to pass the two boys without remark, when it suddenly struck him that Johnstone not only looked dogged and sullen, as was not un-

frequently the case with him, but that he appeared, from some cause or other, to be so weak as scarcely to be able to put one foot before another. His compassion was moved.

"Why, Johnstone," he said, "what is the matter? Are you ill, or have you met with an accident?"

"He has been hit by a cricket-ball, sir," said Gore, anxious to anticipate Johnstone's own story, which might perhaps disclose too truly what had really taken place.

"Hit by a cricket-ball?" returned Mr. Mayhew. "You must mind what you are about, Johnstone, and not go too near when a match is being played. What match has been going on this afternoon, Gore?"

"No match, sir; only some of us have been practising together, and Johnstone offered to stand longstop to Joyce, Dalison, and one or two others."

"I didn't offer," growled Arthur, "you made me."

"I didn't make you," said Gore, quickly.

"If you didn't the others did," returned Arthur.

Mr. Mayhew internally blamed himself for his folly in meddling with the matter, and endeavoured to extricate himself.

"Well, if you were only standing longstop, Johnstone," he said, "you could not be very much hurt. None of our boys bowl so hard that you need be afraid of their balls. Face them boldly, that is the way to learn cricket."

"I shouldn't mind the bowling," said Arthur; "the ball that hit me was struck from a bat."

"I thought you said you were standing longstop?"

"So I was; but Joyce hit round at me."

"Hit round *at* you? Hit round, I suppose you mean. He didn't try to hit you, I imagine?"

"Yes, he did," returned Arthur, in the same tone as before, regardless of the winks and nods which Gore, who was standing a little behind Mr. Mayhew, directed at him.

"Yes, he did; he hit round *at* me, I daresay

a dozen times, before the ball struck me. Trevor was there, and you can ask him if you don't believe me."

Just at this moment Dr. Brooksbank entered the house on his return from riding; and Mr. Mayhew, who felt that the matter was too serious for him to pass over in silence, related what had transpired to his principal.

The Doctor was much moved. "I have several times fancied," he said, "that there was a good deal of bullying going on this half-year, and that the first-class boys were the chief offenders. I shall certainly inquire into this. Where is the boy I saw just now? Gore, was it not? Did I understand you to say he was present?"

"Yes," replied Mr. Mayhew, "both he and Trevor were present, according to Johnstone's account. But Gore seems to be gone."

This was true; that worthy having taken the opportunity of Dr. Brooksbank's entrance to decamp, taking Johnstone with him.

"But," added the usher, "here come Trevor and Joyce;" and, as he spoke, the

two boys named entered the passage, followed at a little distance by Dalison.

"Stop, if you please," said the head master, as the three were about to pass on, "here is something which requires explanation. Arthur Johnstone has told me, or rather he has told Mr. Mayhew, that you have been obliging him to stand behind the wicket, and have hit balls round at him to try and knock him down. Is that so, Joyce?"

"I hit round to leg," replied Joyce, evasively, "and it happened to hit him, no doubt. He ought to have got out of the way."

"*Happened* to hit him, Joyce? I asked you whether you *tried* to hit him. Have the goodness to answer my question."

"I don't know what right any one has to say that I tried to hit him, sir," returned Joyce. "When a ball is bowled so much to leg as the one I struck, there is always a chance of its going near the longstop. He ought to have stopped it, or got out of the way."

" You mean, then, that it was an accident. Mr. Mayhew, however, tells me that Johnstone complained of your having hit round at him a dozen times running, trying to knock him off his legs, and he adds that Trevor knows about it. Whether he was a party to it or not, I do not understand."

" I had hit several times to leg," replied Joyce, in the same tone as before, " but that was because the balls were so bowled. As for Trevor, he had better tell his own story."

" I will question him, for it is plainly no use to inquire of you. But first, who was bowling to you?"

" Dalison, sir," said Joyce.

" Dalison! Where is he?"

But Dalison had prudently followed Gore's example, and walked quietly off, as soon as the Doctor began questioning Joyce.

" Well, then, Trevor," resumed the head master, " you, I find, were present, though I do not understand what part you took. Have the goodness to tell me how far was Johnstone standing behind the wicket?"

"About the usual distance of a longstop, sir."

"No nearer?" asked the Doctor, with a slight frown.

"I have seen a longstop as near," said Frank, anxious if possible to spare Joyce.

"Hem! that hardly accords with what Mr. Mayhew told me. Do I understand you to mean that you think the boy might have stopped the balls, or got out of the way, if he had tried to do so?"

"I think a practised hand certainly could," returned Trevor, "and perhaps Arthur might, if he had been very sharp."

"'Perhaps?' and 'if he had been very sharp?' That is, if the boy had not been very young, new to the ways of the school, and ignorant of the game. You must know that that would make the whole difference; and what would be harmless then, is wanton cruelty now. I am sorry to hear so lame a defence of such conduct from you, Trevor. I should have hoped you would have acted differently. You may go, sir."

Trevor's cheek flushed with indignation, but he could not vindicate himself without accusing his schoolfellow; besides, if he were now to detail all that had passed, it would seem like a retractation of what he had advanced. He turned away without a word, and as he entered the house took his first bitter, but salutary, lesson in that school in which all who would do God's work must study; which teaches that honest efforts to resist evil in others are sure to be met, at the very outset, by calumny and discouragement. If any who have undertaken the better part expect that their motives will be understood, and their acts approved, by the world, they most entirely deceive themselves. The advanced servant of his Master recognizes, in the efforts made to thwart or malign him, the genuine stamp of the Cross; but it is hard for a beginner, like poor Frank, to do so. Nevertheless, he recovered himself after a minute or two, and resolved bravely that he would stick by Mr. Winter and poor little Arthur, let who might misjudge him.

The Doctor now called Joyce up, who had been standing at some distance, and had not heard the conversation between himself and Trevor.

"Joyce," he said, "I would fain believe that you did not intend seriously to injure the little boy; but your conduct is both cowardly and cruel. You will confine yourself to the playground, sir, for the next fortnight; and, if I hear of any repetition of such tyranny, I shall send you away immediately from my school."

So saying, the Doctor pursued his way into the house with a dignity of port and step which, on that occasion at least, became him well. He had meant to do justice, and believed he had. He was, in truth, a kind-hearted and right-minded man; and if not as earnest and anxious as one in his position should be, was, at any rate, in advance in these respects of the schoolmasters of that day; and it is not unlikely that he was wont sometimes to comment on the low standard of duty which his predecessors had acted on,

and would have been greatly surprised if he could by anticipation have heard, how the next generation would speak of *him*. Perhaps a similar revelation of the future might do us, in the present day, no harm !

There was one individual among his hearers, at all events, who did not share the good Doctor's complacent view of his proceedings, but who judged him probably more unfavourably than the severest critics of the succeeding age could do : this was Joyce, who was greatly annoyed at the sentence of confinement to the school precincts, and still more at the instrumentality by which this punishment had been brought about. He would have openly revenged himself upon Trevor and Johnstone if he had dared ; but as the former was his equal in strength and skill, and his superior (he well knew) in courage and spirit, he would, in all probability, have got the worst of any encounter with him. And as for Johnstone, it was clear that he could not reckon upon his keeping back from the masters anything that it might suit his convenience or humour to

tell them. If he tried to pay him out for his impudence, as Joyce considered it, by any act which could be traced personally to him, he would have to undergo the penalty where-with Dr. Brooksbank had threatened him ; and that, he was fully aware, would be a very serious injury to him. Nevertheless, he was resolved that, come what might, he would make both Trevor and Arthur smart for the part they had taken against him. After carefully watching for a considerable time, an opportunity of indulging his malice presented itself.

There was, in the school library, a book which contained a description of the manners and customs of the Hindoos, illustrated by some very elaborate coloured engravings. Among them was one representing the idol Juggernaut, seated, in all his hideousness, upon his shrine, and arrayed in gorgeous attire ; while the Brahmins were depicted as offering sacrifices on an altar before him. It had chanced that one of the boys showed the picture to little Johnstone, with the *bonâ-fide*

idea, I believe, of obtaining some explanation from him respecting its details, which the boy himself did not understand. But the moment that Arthur's eye rested upon it, he exhibited such extreme disgust and alarm, that the boy who had shown it to him was at first astonished, and then diverted, at what he regarded as mere affectation. One or two of the boys, who were witnesses of the scene, were equally amused, and the story was a good deal talked about in the school for a day or two, after which it was displaced in popular favour, and was soon forgotten again.

But it had reached the ears of Joyce, and he resolved to make use of it whenever occasion might serve. The outline of the scheme he had laid out for himself, was to induce Dalison to take up the cudgels against Trevor, and punish his impertinence by practising some annoyance on Arthur. If Trevor resented this, or attempted to prevent it, a personal quarrel with Dalison would ensue, and in that case Frank would probably get

a severe thrashing from Dalison, who was more than a match for Trevor, both in respect of strength and skill. On the other hand, if Trevor made no attempt to prevent Dalison from annoying his *protégé*, that would in itself be a great humiliation, which Joyce would thoroughly enjoy. Further, even if young Johnstone should make a complaint to the masters, and any punishment should ensue, it would alight, he cunningly reflected, on Dalison, and not on him. But his great difficulty in the execution of this design lay in the strange demeanour of his associate. Dalison had hitherto always been willing enough to join in any of the petty persecutions which he was in the habit of devising against the juniors; and in particular, had seemed to find unusual amusement in the annoyances practised on Arthur. He was also, as Joyce felt well assured, considerably provoked with Frank Trevor, who for some time past had not only gradually withdrawn himself from companionship with his old crony, but had repeatedly said and done things which were,

in effect, reflections upon him, if not actually intended to be so. Dalison was not, in general, the kind of fellow to put up with this. All that Joyce could extract out of him, however, when he urged these topics upon him, was a sinister smile and a significant shake of the head.

One day—it was the last, by-the-by, of Joyce's imprisonment—the first class were preparing their morning lesson, previously to the arrival of Dr. Brooksbank; and Dalison and Joyce, having completed their tasks, were chatting carelessly together, when the latter took the opportunity of telling his companion of the exaggerated and absurd horror which Johnstone had exhibited at the sight of the Juggernaut's picture.

"I never saw such an impudent ass as that young nigger is," he exclaimed; "it would be good fun, as well as be serving him right, to make him go through the whole ceremony of offering sacrifice to Juggernaut; I'll be bound he has seen it often enough in India."

I'd make him do it, whether he liked it or not, if I had my way."

"You would have some difficulty in doing that, I expect," said Dalison; "he is the most obstinate young rascal I ever saw. I believe he'd sooner be licked black and blue than do it, even if—"

"I *would* thrash him black and blue," said Joyce, interrupting; "but what were you going to add?"

"I was going to say, even if Trevor did not interfere to stop it."

This was said with apparent indifference of manner, but inwardly Dalison chuckled over the vexation which he knew it caused his auditor. As he had expected, Joyce instantly broke into an angry expression of his feeling.

"Trevor be hanged, Dalison; I can't think what has come to you that you tolerate his impertinence, as you have done for the last month past. I should no more have thought he would have dared to affront you, as he has been doing, without your resenting it, than that—"

"Than that you yourself would resent the affronts he has been offering to *you*, eh?" remarked Dalison, coolly, as Joyce paused, uncertain how to finish his sentence.

"You know why *I* don't resent it," returned Joyce, sulkily; "you know Brickbats has threatened to expel me, if I get into any further row."

"Oh, ay; I know all about it," said Dalison, in the same tone as before. "Frank would be sure to complain to Brooksbank if you were to thrash him, wouldn't he? But never mind, here come the letters; we shall have time to read them before the Doctor comes in. Ha!" he muttered, in a lower tone, to himself; "the governor's hand. This is *the* letter, then! Now then, Master Frank, we shall see what you have been about."

The letter, apparently, was not a very long one, and there was time to finish its perusal before Dr. Brooksbank's arrival. Dalison folded it up, and put it into his pocket without a word of comment; but any one who knew him well would have seen at a glance

that its contents were extremely unwelcome to him. He went through the lesson, however, without any outward manifestation of his annoyance; and it was not until school had broken up, and he and Joyce had retired to the farthest nook of the playground, that he gave any hint of his altered frame of mind. Then he said, abruptly,—

“Joyce, you wish to mortify Trevor, and pay Johnstone out, for getting you into a row, don’t you? There, say yes or no, man, if you want me to help you in doing it. No shilly-shallying; I hate all that!”

“Well, yes, I do,” replied Joyce, startled into sincerity by Dalison’s abruptness.

“Good—well, then, the afternoon is going to be wet, and we shall be kept in-doors. Propose what you suggested about Juggernaut this morning, and I will back you.”

Accordingly, when the boys, prevented from pursuing their out-door sports, were lounging idly about the school-room, prepared for any mischief which might be suggested to them, Joyce proposed that they should

divert themselves with *tableaux vivants*—using for the purpose the costumes belonging to the theatre, which the boys were always allowed to open during the winter half-year. There was a deep embayed window at the farther end of the school-room, over which hung a curtain, let down and drawn up by a pulley. By closing the shutters of the window, as good a frame for *tableaux vivants* was formed as could well be imagined. The idea seemed to promise well, and the boys leaped at it, like trouts at a May-fly. A Babel of voices was almost instantly heard suggesting all kinds of subjects and costumes, classical and mediæval, English and foreign, ancient and modern, possible and impossible, in the most glorious confusion.

“Brutus killing Cæsar,” cried one.

“Wellington and Blucher after Waterloo,” urged another.

“Robin Hood and Friar Tuck,” shouted Billy Waters.

“What do you think of Cromwell cutting off Charles the First’s head?” asked Norton,

whose ideas of history were somewhat confused.

"I should like Achilles selling Hector's body to Priam," said Trevor, who was of a classical turn of mind.

"The Field of the Cloth of Gold," proposed Rivers.

"The Temple of Juggernaut," suggested Joyce.

"Gently, gently," said Dalison, "don't all speak together. We can have 'Brutus killing Cæsar,' no doubt; but the costumes would be all Roman togas, and that wouldn't look well. As for 'Wellington and Blucher,' we ought to get up the Field of Waterloo, with a lot of cannons and dead bodies, and horses, and all that."

"Well, if you come to that," said Heath, "how could you manage the 'Field of the Cloth of Gold?' There ought to be no end of splendid tents, and that sort of thing."

"Or how," said Brackley, "could you manage the beheading Charles the First? There ought to be a great crowd of people

about, and we haven't an axe among the properties, either."

"Well then," said Dalison, "there is only 'Robin Hood and Friar Tuck,' is there?"

"Or the 'Temple of Juggernaut,'" interposed Joyce.

"Oh! ay; the 'Temple of Juggernaut,'" repeated Dalison: "that would look well, I daresay; but how could we manage that?"

"We have a dress in the property-box that is just like the robe which Juggernaut is represented as wearing in the Indian book," said Joyce.

"Oh! yes," said Billy Waters, "so there is; and the old throne, with a curtain thrown over it, would make a good seat for him."

"And one of the high stools would make a capital altar," said Heath.

"That will do famously," exclaimed several voices.

"Let us see the dress and the book, at all events," suggested Dalison.

The cloak, which was of a bright yellow material, ornamented fantastically with red

and black ornaments, being the same in which one of the juvenile performers had last winter enacted the character of a magician, was brought out and compared with the picture of Juggernaut. It was found to agree very fairly; and a head-dress was also extracted from the stores, which, though not very like that of the real Hindoo idol, was judged to serve the purpose sufficiently well. Roman togas and Turkish turbans, with a few emendations, made what was accounted a very suitable costume for the Brahmin priests; and now it only remained to arrange the stage and apportion the parts.

“Who’ll be manager and scene-shifter?” asked Dalison.

“I, I, I!” exclaimed several of the boys together.

“Very well, Rivers, you shall be stage-manager, and you, Joyce, shall be scene-shifter, and draw up and let down the curtain. Now, who’s to be Juggernaut?”

“Billy Waters,” shouted a chorus of voices. Billy gracefully acknowledged the compli-

ment, and, yielding to the general wish, assumed the robes of Juggernaut.

"And now who's to be high priest?" inquired Dalison.

"I," and "I," and "I," "Heath," "Brackley," "Trevor," "you yourself, Dalison," responded a dozen boys at the same moment.

"No, no!" exclaimed a voice, "it ought to be Rajah Sahib; he knows all about it, and can tell us how it ought to be done."

"That is a capital idea," exclaimed Dalison; "where is Sahib? Go and fetch him, some one. He'll do excellently. It ought to be a little fellow, you see, because of course he ought to be smaller than Juggernaut. Dickinson, Ellis, and Webber shall be priests, and Sahib high-priest. Won't that do?"

A general shout of applause bore witness to the popular approval, and several of the bystanders commenced an immediate search after Arthur.

"I don't think he will do," said Trevor, addressing Dalison and Stapleton, in a low voice; "I advise you to choose some one else."

"Certainly, if you wish it, Frank," said Stapleton; "I don't mind, I'm sure."

Dalison, however, took it differently.

"Won't do? why not?" he asked, in a tone which all around him could hear.

"I don't think he would like it," returned Trevor, in a more constrained manner.

"Why shouldn't he?" asked Dalison; "it will do him no harm, will it?"

"I should think not, indeed," said one of the bystanders.

"If he refuses, it will only be because he's sulky," remarked another.

"I vote we make him do it, willy-nilly," cried a third. "He is the sulkiest little beast that ever came to Martin's Green."

"Dalison," said Trevor, annoyed at these remarks, "I put it to you as a personal favour not to make Arthur Johnstone do this, if he doesn't like it. I think it is a shame, and I must fairly say so."

This observation was not judicious.

"I don't see what business it is of yours," growled one or two.

"I shall make it my business," retorted Frank, sharply.

"Oh! come," said Joyce, "we can't be dictated to in this way. I, for one, won't stand it, and if Stapleton doesn't choose to act Juggernaut, I will. Oh! here's Sahib at last. Now then, you young beast, do you hear what you are to do? You are to put on that dress which you see there, and that turban, and stand in front of that stool, in the same attitude as the figure in this picture. If you refuse, or make any fuss, you will get as sound a walloping as ever you had in your life. Do you hear what I say?"

The boys in general, and Dalison and Joyce in particular, had been prepared for an outbreak of passion; but they had not anticipated such a transport of fury as this intimation called forth. The boy shook from head to foot as though seized with a violent fit of ague; and his face, instead of growing dark purple, as was usually the case when he was excited by anger, became perfectly livid, as he looked at the preparations for the *tableaux*.

His struggles were so violent that two of the biggest boys were unable to hold him ; and escaping from their grasp, he rushed up for the second time to Frank Trevor, and clung with the energy of despair round his knees.

“ Come, none of that, youngster,” exclaimed Joyce, as soon as he had recovered from his surprise. “ Leave go there, or it will be the worse for you. We’ll soon see who is master here ! ” And as he spoke he stepped up to Arthur, with the evident intention of tearing him away from Trevor’s knees, regardless of the expression of the latter’s face, which intimated a strong disposition to resist his interference.

“ Joyce,” he exclaimed, as he approached, “ I advise you to leave Johnstone alone. I don’t want to quarrel with you ; but I won’t suffer this.”

“ Do you mean you will prevent me from taking him away ? ”

“ Yes,” rejoined Trevor ; “ touch him at your peril. Once and for all, I won’t see him bullied.”

"Bullied, Trevor?" said Dalison, coming forward as Joyce paused for a moment, embarrassed, as it appeared, by Frank's reply. "Do I understand you to call Joyce and me bullies?"

"I have still less wish to quarrel with you than with Joyce," returned Trevor, calmly; "we are old friends, though we have been cool of late, and I don't want to say anything offensive. I only ask you to leave Johnstone alone."

"You have not answered my question," replied Dalison, coldly; "do you retract the word 'bully,' as applied to Joyce and me?"

"No," retorted Trevor, haughtily; "I did not apply the word directly to you; but I think what you want to do to Johnstone *is* bullying, and I shall not retract my opinion."

"Then you will just take the consequences of your impertinence," said Dalison, coolly stripping off his coat, and approaching his adversary as he spoke. "Now, then, do you

mean to stand up to me like a man, or am I to thrash you at my leisure?"

Trevor made no reply; but, disengaging himself from Arthur, he too took off his coat, and stepped out to meet his antagonist.

"No, no!" exclaimed Brackley, interposing; "don't you two fellows quarrel—at all events, not to-day; just recollect that Monday is the only whole holiday for the rest of the half, and that we are to go down the river and have a jolly lark; and if you two fellows, the two head boys of the school, fight, Brickbats will be certain to forbid our going. I can't see that there is anything to fight about; but anyhow, put it off till after Monday."

"Very well," said Dalison, as coolly as before, "we will put it off till Monday. Take away Juggernaut's robes and throne for the present. On Monday evening, in the long room, Trevor, we will settle this. Either you ask my pardon and cease to interfere between Johnstone and us, or you have as

good a licking as I ever gave a fellow in my life."

"I have no objection to make," said Trevor; and, taking Arthur by the hand, he left the school-room.

CHAPTER IV.

I SUPPOSE I need hardly say that there was plenty of talk among the Bruns-wickers about the fight which was to come off between Dalison and Trevor. I don't believe that anything else was talked of for ten minutes together, during the whole of Friday and Saturday—notwithstanding that the programme of Monday's proceedings had been made known, by authority, to the boys on the evening of the former day. None of them had any doubt but that Frank would lose the day, and probably be severely punished by his antagonist besides.

"He hasn't a chance with Dalison," said Brackley, who was discussing the affair with Charlie Rivers and Stapleton on the Saturday afternoon in a corner of the playground.
"He hasn't the ghost of a chance, I tell you.

Why! look at that fight with Bullface. He was three inches taller than Frank, and I'll be bound three inches wider across the shoulders; he was twice as strong as Trevor, and a plucky fellow into the bargain. And yet you saw what a milling he got from Dalison. It is nonsense, in my opinion, for Frank to try to stand up to him. He had better give in at once, that is my opinion, and that is what I should advise him to do."

"He won't do that," said Rivers; "I have no more doubt than you have, that he will be tremendously thrashed; but he'll go on as long as he can stand. He is a gentleman born and bred, and Bullface was only a snob, though I agree with you, he was a plucky one. I prophesy Trevor won't walk off the ground as he did."

"More's the pity," said Stapleton; "Frank's as good a fellow as ever came to Martin's Green, in my judgment; and if he did want to prevent that poor miserable little Sahib from being bullied, it was nothing but kindness. I think it a great shame of

Dalison to take it up as he has done. I heard Trevor tell Dalison that he did not wish to offend him in any way."

"It is all that Joyce's doing," said Rivers. "He put Dalison up to it, I know. If the fight were to be between Frank and Joyce, I shouldn't so much care."

"No," said Brackley; "nor if it were between Dalison and Joyce; I shouldn't for my part object to see that."

"I should think not," observed Stapleton; "but we may wait a long time before we shall see that, I expect. But seriously, don't you think something might be done to prevent the fight from coming off? I don't mean by advising Frank to knock under. I agree with Charlie that nothing would induce him to do that. But something else might be thought of."

"Would you suggest to Dalison, that *he* should give up his intention of obliging Sahib to take his part in the *tableau*?" asked Brackley, with a slight sarcasm in his tone.

"That is nonsense," said Rivers. "Every-

body knows that he wouldn't do that, unless it happened to suit his own purpose—no, not to please his own father! And it is plain, for some reason or other, that he has some spite against Frank, which he wishes to gratify. But I agree with Billy, that we might try to do something. Do you think that, for instance, we could keep this young chap Sahib out of the way? If he wasn't there on Monday evening, Dalison could not of course compel him to dress up and all that; and then there would be no pretext for interfering with Frank."

"That is not a bad idea," said Brackley, "and I confess it had not occurred to me. Yes, if he would ask leave to go to bed immediately after the boys returned from the water, Dalison could not get hold of him, until the next day at all events."

"The next day would not signify," said Stapleton. "The long room is open only on Monday evenings; and on the Monday after next they will begin to get it ready for the examinations. So if Sahib could be

kept out of the way for that one evening, the whole thing might blow over."

"Well, perhaps it might," said Brackley; "at all events it is worth trying. Just go and fetch young Johnstone here, Rivers, there's a good fellow; we'll try what we can do with him."

Charlie complied, and after a quarter of an hour's search, found the boy in question in a corner of the school-room, sheltered as much as possible from general observation behind one of the desks. He made no demur to accompany Rivers, who, next to Trevor, was the boy who treated him with the most kindness.

"Well, Rajah," began Brackley, as soon as he saw him, "so you know, I suppose, that Trevor and Dalison are going to fight on your account?"

Arthur put on his sullen face as soon as he heard the word "Rajah;" and Rivers, who saw that Brackley had made a mistake in so addressing him, hastened to interpose.

"Trevor has been kind to you, has he not, Arthur?" he asked.

"Yes," replied the boy, his face clearing again; "he has been very kind to me always."

"And you would be sorry to see him severely hurt?"

"Yes, of course."

"And you would try to prevent it, if you could?"

"I don't know what you mean," replied Johnstone.

"Well, what we mean is this," said Brackley: "Dalison intends to make you put on a particular dress on Monday evening, and act the part of a Hindoo Priest in the *tableau*; and Trevor has declared that he will interfere to prevent it. Now, if they do fight, Trevor is sure to get much the worst of it, and will probably be very much hurt. We want to prevent them from fighting, and believe that if you keep out of the way, there will be no row."

"If Dalison attempts it, he will get the worst of it," interposed Johnstone.

"The worst of it?" returned Brackley;

"that is nonsense. He is far more than a match for Trevor."

"He will get much the worst of it," repeated Arthur, with flashing eyes.

"Why, what do you mean, Sahib?"

"Never mind what I mean," returned the other, doggedly; "I tell you Dalison and Joyce will get the worst of it, if they attempt it."

"Well, but, Arthur," said Rivers, "would it not be better to avoid the chance of a row altogether? If you will merely ask Mrs. Brooksbank leave to go to bed as soon as we come home from the party on Monday, there will be no fuss at all. You can say you are tired, or something of the kind, and she will be sure to let you. That is all we want you to do."

"You surely won't refuse to do that," urged Stapleton, noticing that the boy made no reply.

"Yes, I do," returned Arthur in the same tone of dogged obstinacy he had used before, "I do refuse. I tell you Dalison and Joyce

will repent it if they persist in bullying me, or hurting Trevor. I won't shirk out of their way, or ask Mrs. Brooksbank leave to go to bed. Let them do what they like, and take the consequences. I don't care."

"There, take yourself off, you young wretch," exclaimed Brackley, much disgusted. "It was a great mistake to have anything to do with a young Hottentot like that; we must give the thing up. If Trevor chooses to set Dalison at defiance, and Dalison is determined to thrash Trevor, we can't help it."

"Well, I don't quite agree with you there," said Stapleton. "I shall make another attempt, though altogether of a different character. I shan't meddle with Sahib again, I promise you. By-the-by, I wonder what he could have meant by saying that Dalison would get the worst of it?"

"He meant nothing, I expect," said Brackley, "except that he was in a great rage with Dalison, and wanted to pay him out if he could. But what do you mean to try, Billy, yourself?"

"Well," said Stapleton, "I shall try to get Hiems to ask Frank to tea that evening. I think I could manage that. And it will not much signify, you know, whether Dalison and Joyce persist in making young Johnstone do what they want, so long as Frank isn't there to interfere. I must confess I shouldn't be over sorry, after what we have heard, if that young savage did get a good licking, so long as Frank didn't suffer by it."

"Nor I," said Brackley; and Rivers likewise subscribing to the same sentiment, Billy proceeded with his usual astuteness to put his scheme in operation. He first waited awhile to see whether Johnstone's nerves would not be shaken by the preparations which were being made for the ceremony of Monday evening; which showed that Dalison was determined to persist in the programme he had laid down. In accordance with this, he had ordered the "long room" to be prepared for Juggernaut's sacrifice, and had removed thither the throne, the altar, and the various robes and other properties

necessary for its due representation. This long chamber, by-the-by, was a low attic, running the whole way over the school-room. It had once been used as a dormitory; but Dr. Brooksbank had found it so difficult of management, that he had, early in his occupation of the premises, built an additional wing to his house, and removed thither the beds. The room was now used by the boys for various purposes. On the occasion of the public examination, as has already been intimated, it was employed as a convenient place, where the various candidates could be placed sufficiently widely apart from each other to preclude all possibility of copying from one another. During the winter months it was converted to the purposes of a theatre; and on Monday evenings, during the summer season, the boys were allowed to assemble there for any legitimate purpose which might happen to occur to them.

Hither it was that Dalison had caused the various theatrical properties to be conveyed, which would be employed in the *tableau*,

the performance of which he and Joyce had fully resolved to insist upon.

Well, Stapleton waited awhile to see how Johnstone would take the preparations made by Dalison's order, for the accomplishment of the purpose which he had declared he meant most certainly to carry out on the Monday evening, after the business of the day was over. But the sight of the preparations produced apparently no kind of effect on their intended victim ; unless indeed a more determined fit of obstinacy could be regarded as such : and Billy Waters was obliged to fall back on the scheme which he had already propounded to Brackley and Rivers. This he accomplished, as he flattered himself, with some cleverness. He went to Mr. Winter on the Monday morning, and asked whether he would allow him to examine again a book of prints, which he had seen on the occasion of one of his visits to that gentleman's study. Receiving a ready assent from the good-natured usher, he inquired further whether Trevor might be allowed to

come and see it also. Mr. Winter, presuming that Stapleton had preferred this request, in consequence of Trevor's wish to that effect, gave without hesitation the required permission; and finding that the evening of the same day was the time which would suit them best, invited them to come at that time. Billy forthwith informed Frank thereof, representing it as a regular invitation to tea. Trevor was somewhat annoyed, but having no suspicion of the trick which had been practised, and no reason at hand for refusing, was obliged to reply in the affirmative; and it was agreed that he and Stapleton should go to Mr. Winter's room as soon as they returned from their expedition that evening. Billy obtained a good deal of credit with Brackley and Rivers for his ingenuity, as the three boys met together in the hall of Brunswick House, prepared to set out on their party of pleasure. Perhaps the reader may think that the credit was not very well deserved, seeing that it was obtained by means which were anything but honest. But the

result did not by any means accord with Billy's expectation; as indeed is generally the case with people who prefer a cunning mode of doing things, to honest straightforward dealing.

Boys, however, are seldom inclined to be very rigid critics on such subjects, and they are still less likely to be so on such occasions as the present. It was a bright, glorious summer day, the very day for such a party as theirs. They were to go down the river in a large row barge, specially hired for the occasion, to a gentleman's park a few miles distant, who had allowed Dr. Brooksbank the use of his grounds for the occasion. There they were to have dinner on the bank, and after that to run wild in the woods, picking flowers, and hunting for eggs, or amusing themselves with games the whole afternoon. How should boys under such circumstances remember anything but the delights of the passing hour? It was not until they had all returned, sated with pleasure, though still untired (for whatever does tire boys?), and

had talked over the various incidents of the day, that the recollection of Sahib and his unconsummated sacrifice occurred to any one. But after an hour had been devoted to the discussion of a variety of interesting topics—how Rawdon had nearly tumbled into the river, as he was trying to hand Miss Brooksbank out of the barge, and what a game it would have been if he had ; and how Philips and Dunbar had found a rabbit dead in a trap—at least, they said it was dead—and had got leave to bring it home and have it for supper; and how a lot of fellows while playing at hide and seek had come upon a nest of adders, and had nearly been bitten, only they ran off, and told the other fellows ; and how Heath and Gore and Robinson had fallen in with a gang of gipsies, and had their fortunes told, and had been presented with a live hedgehog, which they meant to keep (unlucky beast !) in a box in the upper room—after an hour had been passed in talking over these and the like matters, Stapleton and Rivers were summoned by one of the boys to Mr. Winter's

room ; and not long afterwards Dalison and Joyce entered the playground in search of Arthur Johnstone, who, it seemed, was nowhere to be found. Brackley at first imagined that Sahib had, after all, taken his advice, and was keeping judiciously out of the way ; but this soon proved to be a mistake, for, on entering the long-room to complete the necessary preparations, they discovered the boy seated quietly on a box, looking his very darkest and sullenest, but not evincing the least symptom of fear or hesitation. He had found his match, however, as regarded obstinacy of purpose in Dalison.

“ Oh, you are here, are you ? ” he exclaimed, as his eye fell upon Arthur. “ Where is Trevor, I wonder ? ”

“ He is taking tea with Hiems,” said one of the boys. “ I saw him going with Billy Waters into his room about half an hour ago.”

“ Oh,” said Dalison, with a sneer. “ Well, that is lucky for him perhaps ; but it does not signify to me. Well, we must lose no

time in settling this matter. It is later, I see, than I had thought. Put on Juggernaut's robes, Joyce, and we will manage the rest in two minutes."

Joyce complied in silence, and was on the point of ascending his shrine when he was stopped by Dalison.

"No," he said; "wait a moment; let Johnstone put on his dress and take his place first. Now, you young whelp, you understand what you are to do, and you had better set about doing it without more bother. Do you see that dress there? Put it on at once."

"I won't," said Arthur, doggedly.

"Won't you? we'll see all about that. Here, you fellows, take off his trousers and shoes while I hold him, and then put the others on him."

Johnstone resisted with all his might, but, it was vain for him to struggle against Dalison's grasp. The change of costume was soon effected by himself and Heath, and they were proceeding to drag the exhausted boy up to the altar, when Trevor suddenly entered.

Billy's scheme had broken down unexpectedly. Mr. Winter had been engaged to take tea with Dr. and Mrs. Brooksbank, and had only sent for the boys to look through the portfolio of prints, which Stapleton had asked to see. This did not occupy above half an hour, and as soon as they had been all examined Mr. Winter had dismissed his guests.

Frank entered at an unfortunate moment. Dalison and Heath were dragging Arthur across the room, and Joyce was on the point of mounting to his eminence. His arrival was altogether unexpected, and Heath, startled by it, let go his hold on Johnstone, who broke loose from Dalison and took refuge, not this time with Trevor, but in a corner of the room behind some boards, whence it would be very difficult to dislodge him. The boys, baffled for the moment, turned their attention to Trevor.

"Here comes the champion," exclaimed Joyce, with a mocking laugh. "Now, Dalison, look out for yourself, or you will be chawed up before you know where you are."

"No, no," said Brackley; "don't let us have any quarrelling. Frank, it is nothing but a bit of fun. I don't believe Sahib himself would care a bit about it, if he was only asked instead of driven to do it. Here, Arthur, come out, there is a good fellow, and don't get Trevor thrashed," he added in a lower tone, which the boy addressed alone could hear. "No one will hurt you, and it is nothing but nonsense."

To the surprise of everybody, Arthur at once complied with their request, and came out from his retreat, with a scowl upon his face, it is true, but without any attempt at resistance. He was walking quietly up to the altar, when Joyce, who was disappointed as well as astonished at this bloodless issue to the fray, again interposed.

"Well, come, that is a good one too! So, Trevor, you have advised meek and patient submission to your pet, have you? Very prettily behaved indeed, and very wise into the bargain."

"Rather different from what he said last

Thursday, I must say," observed Heath,
"hey, Dalison?"

"Rather," said Dalison; "but people think better of it sometimes. Would you like to come a little nearer, Trevor, and then you will see that he does it correctly?"

"You need not be insolent, Dalison," exclaimed Trevor, his face growing crimson as he heard these taunts. "I was sent for by one of the masters, or I should have been here to prevent what you have already done to Johnstone; and now I warn you to bully him no more."

"You mean to fight me, then?" inquired Dalison.

"I mean to prevent you from bullying Johnstone, if I can."

"That comes to the same thing. Well, if you like to have a good thrashing first, and see Johnstone offer sacrifice afterwards, instead of seeing him do it at once, I'm sure I have not the least objection."

Brackley and Stapleton again attempted to interfere, but without producing any impres-

sion on either party. The combatants stripped off their jackets, and a ring was formed. As every one had foreseen, Trevor proved no match for his stronger and more skilful antagonist. But his pluck and resolution protracted the fight longer than any one could have expected ; and when he was at last obliged to succumb by a heavy blow on the head, Dalison's face exhibited some very evident symptoms that his victory had not been gained without severe punishment. The boys looked on almost in silence, and without any of the eager interest which they usually showed in such encounters ; and at its conclusion Brackley made another attempt to induce Dalison to push the thing no further.

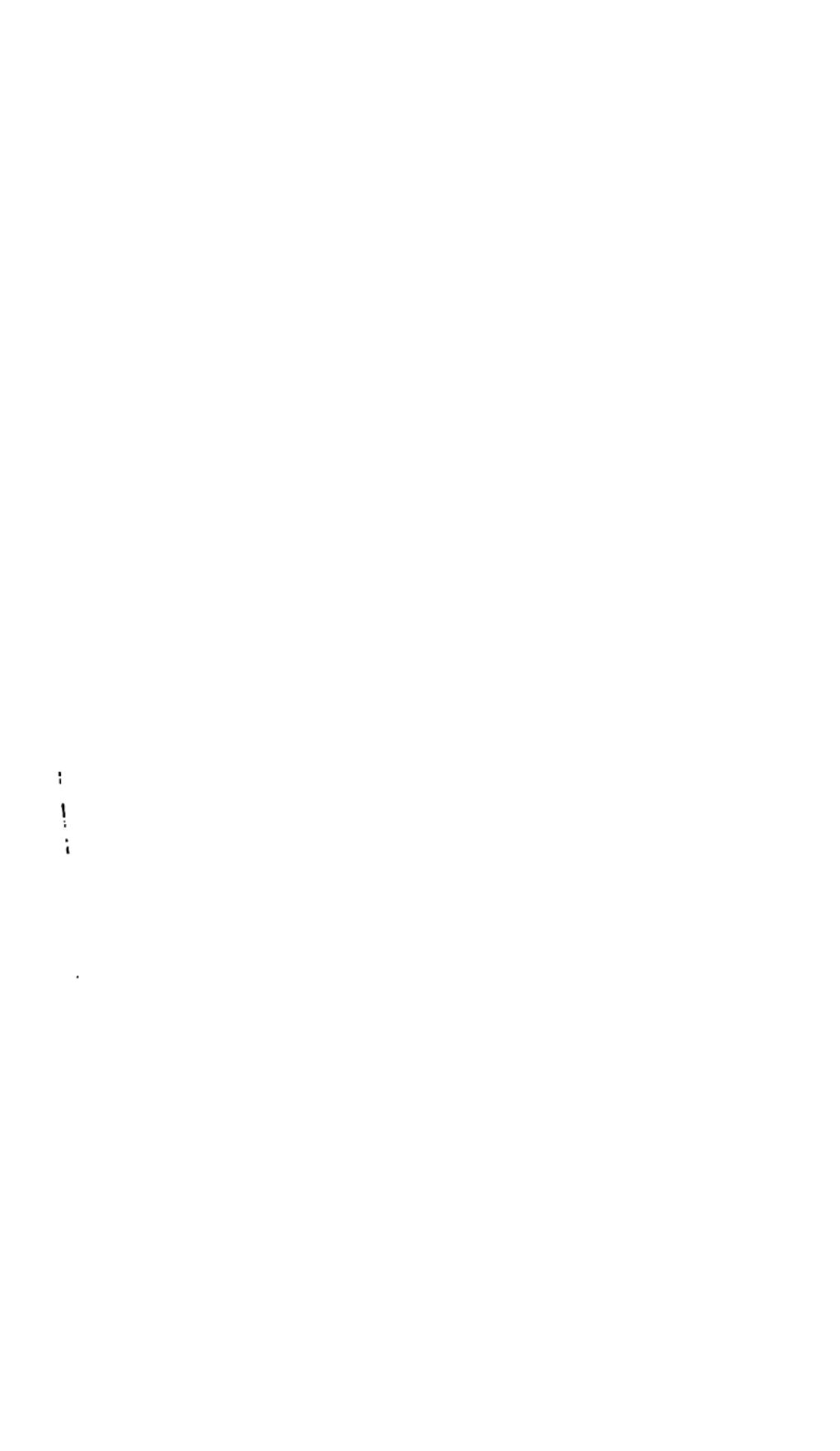
"There, Dalison," he said, "you have gained the day. Frank can't resist you any longer. Won't that be enough, without making the poor little beggar do it ? "

A slight applause followed this speech, which had the effect of provoking still further Dalison's irritation. His was not one of those tempers that are satisfied with success ;

and the pain of the blows and the obstinate resistance with which he had been met only roused him to greater anger.

“No,” he exclaimed, savagely, “it won’t do, Brackley, and that is all about it. Don’t you interfere;” and again stepping up to Arthur, he seized him by the collar, and began, with Heath’s help, once more to drag him towards the altar.

Arthur had stood by during the fight, with the same expression of face which he had worn from the moment when they had discovered him in the room,—an expression so peculiar that, if the attention of the boys had not been drawn off to other matters of interest, it could not have failed to engross it. It was not fear, and it scarcely seemed to be anger; but rather dogged and resolute expectation of some unforeseen and disastrous result. He made no resistance, but walked quietly by Dalison’s side to the required spot, and the next minute Joyce would have assumed his seat, if a strange and unexpected incident had not intervened.



Trevor was still leaning against the shoulder of Billy Waters, who had been his second in the battle. He had scarcely recovered his consciousness, and was too weak to interfere further in Arthur's defence. Joyce, as he passed him, could not forbear a taunt, which was scarcely heard by the boy himself, but roused the indignation of the bystanders.

“Shame! shame!” was the general cry, and a rush was made, which obliged him to step hurriedly on one side, or he would have been thrown down by his assailants. In doing so he came sharply into collision with the chair, which, covered with shawls and cushions, stood ready for Juggernaut’s reception; and it was overturned on the floor. A cry of horror and amazement broke from the boys. The uppermost shawl had been dislodged by the fall, and from its folds a live adder of the largest size had disengaged itself, which, as though sensible of the presence of enemies, was now writhing and hissing on the floor. The boys stared for a few moments at this strange and alarming spectacle. Then a

general rush to the door followed; and in two minutes the snake, the Indian boy, and Frank Trevor, who was still too much exhausted to be sensible of what was passing, remained the only occupants of the apartment.

CHAPTER V.

IT was a regular panic, such as sometimes takes possession of men as well as boys. The whole posse, amounting, perhaps, to thirty or forty fellows, ran at full speed down the long-room stairs, tumbling, in their haste, over one another, and making no pause until they reached the school-room, where the rest of their schoolfellows, astonished in their turn at such an irruption, crowded up to ascertain the cause.

For a few minutes nothing was heard but a medley of voices, each relating what had occurred, and offering all kinds of suggestions, possible and impossible, without paying the slightest heed to what any one else might be saying.

At last, the turmoil quieted down so far that some of the elder boys were able to make themselves heard.

"There can be no doubt," said Brackley, "that Johnstone put the viper under the shawl; he must have brought it home with him out of Sir George's woods."

"Yes," said Rivers, "I remember seeing him with a basket on his arm as we were coming home. He said he had a lot of moss in it."

"And I saw him going to the place where we found the adders," said Middleton; "I remember, when I told him that we had come upon a lot of them, that he went off in that direction, though I did not think anything of it at the time."

"Oh, it must have been Sahib, no doubt," said Heath; "no one but he would have thought of bringing such a thing home."

"Or of putting it to bite one of the fellows," added Gore.

"Of course," said Dalison, "there can be no earthly doubt that he brought the viper home, and put it where it was found; and no more doubt, I should think, that he put it there intending it to bite Joyce or me. But

the question is, what is it best for us to do?"

"I think we ought to tell Brickbats," said Brackley. "I hate telling things to the masters as much as any one can; but this is a different matter altogether from a school row. A fellow's life isn't safe unless this young savage is sent away."

"Hear, hear!" said several voices.

"Well," said Dalison, "I own, for my part, I don't see the good of telling Brickbats; at all events, not till the end of the half-year. Johnstone is scarcely likely to attempt anything of the kind a second time before the holidays; and when we go home, we can get one of our fathers to write to old Brooksbank. But there will be no end of fuss, and bother, and inquiry; and he'll be giving us an awfully long prose, and perhaps a punishment into the bargain."

"I'll tell you what we can do," said Rivers; "we can tell Mr. Winter. He'll tell us what is best for us to do, and we are always safe with him."

“Well, for my part,” said Joyce, “I’d rather tell Brickbats than Winter, if I must tell one or the other. Winter would give us a prose an hour long, which is three quarters of an hour longer than Brooksbank would.”

“No telling the masters, I vote,” said Gore.

“I second the motion,” said Dalison.

“I say ditto to you,” said Heath.

“Very well,” said Brackley, “have it so, if you like it: only just be good enough to remember that we can’t leave Sahib and his viper to play any tricks they please upon us.”

“No,” said Stapleton; “I should think not indeed. I have no fancy for finding the gentleman in my bed to-night, if he—that is, if Sahib—should happen to take any offence with me. I declare I sha’n’t sleep a wink for thinking of it.”

“To be sure,” said Charlie Rivers; “we must take it away from him. Even if he did not mean any one harm, the brute might crawl into a corner and bite some one unawares.

And talking of that, by the by, where's Frank Trevor gone? I hope he has not been left up in the room there by himself."

"I am afraid he must be," said Brackley. "I suppose he must have been too weak to come with us when we chivied. He would be here, of course, if he hadn't stayed upstairs."

"Well, then," exclaimed Rivers and Stapleton, in the same breath, "we ought to go at once and look after him. For my part," added Rivers, "I had no idea he had been left there, or I would not have come away without him."

The rest of the party assenting, the suggestion was at once acted upon; but when the boys arrived at the foot of the long-room stairs, they found that the door which led to them was fastened inside. They knocked several times, and tried to force the door open, but without success; they then shouted to Frank through the keyhole, but received no answer.

"I say," said Brackley, "this is serious.

Of course, Johnstone must have bolted the door ; and who knows what he may have been doing to Frank all this time ? ”

“ He wouldn’t hurt him,” said Joyce, with something of a sneer in his tone ; “ he is too great a favourite of his for that.”

“ I wouldn’t answer for that,” said Norton ; “ when fellows like that get into a regular rage, they don’t mind whom they hurt. I recollect, a week or two ago, I tried to take away a sort of brass locket, or bullet, or some such thing, which he wears hung round his neck by a chain——”

“ Oh, ay ! I know it,” said Rivers ; “ he showed it me one day. But it is gold, not brass ; it is some kind of charm, I believe, which he told me once his father had given him. It was chased and carved in a strange outlandish manner ; and so was the chain, too.”

“ Gold or brass,” said Norton, “ I didn’t want to steal it, but only to look at it—he might have known that. But he flew into such a fury the moment I attempted to touch

it, that I thought he would have run me through with Middleton's big knife, which was lying near him. And he would have run Middleton through as well, merely for laughing at him, if Tommy hadn't snatched the knife up, before he could lay hold of it."

"Well, never mind that now," said Brackley, "the thing to be done is to get Frank out of his clutches. I vote we try to break the door down."

"Well, we can try," said Gore; "but it is very strong, and I expect we shall have a difficult job."

A hammer and screw-driver, which had often been used to open the boxes and desks of the boys who chanced to have mislaid their keys, were now fetched; and a dozen of the strongest among the bystanders pushed with all their force, but the door remained immovable.

"Is the window bolted?" inquired Joyce, as they desisted from their efforts. "If it is not, we can get in from the roof of the shoe-house; I got out that way one day last

summer, when I happened to be locked in; so of course it would be possible to get in that way. Run round, Middleton, and see."

A renewed effort was made during Middleton's absence, but with as little success as before. In a minute or two Tommy returned with the information that the window of the long-room was not only unfastened, but was standing wide open. This occasioned some surprise.

"I am pretty sure it was not open when we were in the room," said Joyce.

"I am quite sure it was not," said Dalison. "I recollect shutting it, when we first went in, and it was not opened afterwards."

"Well, anyhow, we can get in now," observed Brackley. "Let some one go round and try."

Half-a-dozen volunteers for the service were on the point of setting off, when steps were heard slowly descending the long-room stairs. The boys stood still in breathless expectation. Presently the door was unbolted, and Frank

Trevor appeared. He seemed still weak and faint, and clung to the banister for support.

"Hurrah, Frank!" shouted Stapleton, as he came in sight. "You are all right, are you not, Frank? You have not been bitten?"

"Bitten, Billy, what do you mean?" answered Frank, "who should there be to bite me?"

"Where's Sahib?" asked another boy.

"I don't know, I am sure," exclaimed Trevor, more surprised than before. "Isn't he with you? I know nothing about him. And I can't think what could have made you fellows leave me alone in the long-room, as you did. You might have waited till I had come to my senses, at all events."

The boys endeavoured to explain; but they were in such a state of bewilderment, and interrupted each other so incessantly, that Frank could make nothing of the business.

"Why, Frank," exclaimed Rivers, suddenly in a tone which arrested every one's

attention, “what have you got there fastened round your neck ?”

“Round my neck !” said Trevor, “nothing, that I know of, except my watch-chain.” As he spoke, he put his hand into his vest, and to his own astonishment drew forth a gold-embossed chain, having a curious ornament, something resembling a locket, attached to it. “Why, what can this be ?” he exclaimed ; “where does this come from ? I never saw it before in my life, that I remember.”

“I have seen it, though,” said Rivers. “It is the very ornament you were talking about, Norton. It belongs to young Sahib, and he always wears it round his neck.”

“Yes, that is it,” replied Norton, “I should know it among a thousand.”

“What can have become of him ?” cried Joyce, his face and tone alike expressing considerable uneasiness.

“We had better go upstairs and see,” said Dalison, quietly ; “we must find him as well as the viper, and then we can talk about what is best to be done.”

The boys agreed to the suggestion, though not without some inward trepidation, and ascended the stairs in a body. They peeped through the keyhole, and perceiving nothing, cautiously opened the door, half expecting Arthur to rush out upon them with some weapon in his hand, or to have the adder thrown, hissing and furious, among them. But the room was silent, and seemed to be empty. A few anxious glances satisfied them that this was the case, and then the whole throng of boys poured in. Arthur was gone, and had, to all appearance, taken the snake with him. At least, after the closest search, no trace could be discovered of either. The open window suggested the mode of exit, and it was now remembered that the boy had his hat with him when Dalison and Joyce had found him in the long chamber.

Arthur was gone, beyond a doubt; but whither and for how long? Those who had taken the principal part in his persecution were greatly alarmed, and wished heartily, as boys generally do after bullying one another,

that they had left him alone. They would have concealed all knowledge of what had occurred, but that was impossible. There remained now scarcely ten minutes before they would be summoned to prayers, and then of course Johnstone's absence must be discovered. This short interval was employed in a hurried search of Arthur's bedroom; a corner of the schoolroom to which he was wont to resort, when anxious to avoid the pursuit of his schoolfellows; and finally, of Mr. Winter's study (from which that gentleman was still absent), in the forlorn hope that he had taken shelter there. But all quest was vain, and the boys were at length obliged to assemble in the schoolroom for prayers, without any addition to their information on the subject. Before Dr. Brooksbank came in, however, the resolution already agreed upon, of observing entire silence as to the circumstances which had preceded the boy's departure was renewed; Dalison and Joyce adding in the hearing of all, that they would thrash any junior within an inch of his life who gave

the slightest hint as to what had occurred. Presently the Doctor arrived, and Arthur's absence was of course discovered. Slowly and unwillingly the boys admitted that he had come home from the water-party with the others ; that he had been seen half an hour afterwards ; that he had now disappeared, no one knew whither ; they had been engaged for the last hour in trying to find him ; and lastly, that he was certainly nowhere in Brunswick House.

Much alarmed, Dr. Brooksbank immediately sent out messengers in various directions, to make inquiries of the neighbours ; Mr. Winter volunteering to conduct the search. After his departure, the head master proceeded to inquire with greater minuteness into the circumstances more immediately connected with Arthur's disappearance.

"Who was last in his company, I should like to know ?" he asked. There was no response. "I insist upon the boy who was last in his company coming forward. I shall be sure to find out who it was from other

sources ; and it will prejudice that boy much, whoever he may be, if he attempts to hide himself. Let him step forward now.”

After another pause the crowd opened, and Frank Trevor stepped out. He had been doubting whether Dr. Brooksbank’s challenge applied to him, since, though he had been literally, so far as he knew, the last in his company, he had been wholly unconscious of the fact. The Doctor noticed his hesitation, and, as his eye fell on Frank’s swollen cheeks and blackened eyes, a frown of displeasure gathered on his forehead.

“ You, Trevor,” he said, “ you mixed up in a matter like this ! And I remember now, you were one of those whom I was obliged to reprove for harshness to this very boy, not a fortnight ago. And the state in which your face is shows that you have been engaged in some discreditable quarrel. But I have no time to inquire into that now. Were you the last person with Johnstone, before he was missed ? ”

“ I believe I was,” answered Trevor, in a

constrained voice, for he was hurt at what he felt to be injustice.

“*You believe you were. I wish you would answer plainly. Do you know that you were the last?*”

“Yes,” said Frank, “I have learned that it was so.”

“Do you know, or can you surmise, the reason why he has run away?”

Trevor coloured painfully.

“Perhaps I can,” he said at last, in a low tone.

“What was it?”

There was no answer.

“What was it, sir? This is too serious a matter to be passed over, as a slighter offence might be. I insist on your telling me.”

“I do not think I ought to be obliged to say,” replied Trevor, rather haughtily, for his indignation was roused at finding the Doctor’s anger levelled a second time, without sufficient reason, at him.

“Very well, I cannot make you answer.

But from your language and demeanour, and present appearance, as well as from my recollection of what occurred a fortnight ago, I cannot but draw a very unfavourable inference. You will go to bed at once, sir, and I need not tell you, you will receive no prize when you leave, unless this is fully explained.

Frank obeyed without a word of remonstrance. His heart swelled at the injustice he had received, and he resolved to write at once to his father and beg of him to take him home immediately. Had Mr. Winter been at hand, matters might have gone differently ; but he went off the same night, after giving in his report to the Doctor, to communicate the affair to Arthur's relations, and did not return for several days.

As Trevor left the room there was a low murmur of dissatisfaction among the boys, and one or two seemed inclined to speak out. But the Doctor went on without noticing it.

“There was another boy,” he said, “whom I punished at the same time for annoying this

boy. Who was it ? I do not clearly remember ? ”

Joyce came forward. “ It was I, sir.”

“ Ah ! to be sure ; so it was. Have you been teasing Johnstone again, Joyce ? and do you know why he has taken this step, or where he has gone ? ”

“ I haven’t touched Arthur Johnstone, to my knowledge, sir, for the last fortnight ; and I know no more where he has gone to than you do.”

This was true as regards the mere letter, for his persecution of Arthur had been limited to his assumption of Juggernaut’s robes. But it needs not to say that in spirit it was as false as any lie that was ever told.

The Doctor seemed satisfied with the answer. “ Am I to understand that no boy here can tell me why Johnstone has run away, or where he now is ? ”

A general silence ensued. Independently of their promise, the boys really did not consider that the usage which Arthur had received was sufficient to justify or account for the

serious step he had taken; and, as regarded the place of his retreat, they were entirely ignorant. Dismissed by Dr. Brooksbank, they retired *en masse* to bed, and it needed nothing more than a few promises and threats on the part of Dalison and Joyce to bind them anew to strict secrecy as to what had passed.

About an hour after their departure Mr. Winter returned. He had obtained but little information, and that little very inconclusive. A servant in the employ of the gentleman who lived next door had seen some one drop from the wall of the playground some two hours before; and a woman returning from London had met a boy nearly corresponding to Arthur's description walking rapidly, with a basket in his hand, in the direction of the ferry. The ferrymen, however, on being questioned, declared that he had not conveyed any boy over the river that afternoon; and no other trace of him could be discovered.

On the following day the search was

renewed : bills were posted ; advertisements inserted in the papers ; the Bow-street runners called into requisition ; and every possible effort made to obtain a clue to the mystery. But, beyond the discovery of the basket half hidden among some rushes by the water's edge, no trace whatever could be found. The suspicion that the boy, whose fits of passionate fury had become notorious at Brunswick House, had destroyed himself in a paroxysm of anger, gained ground in the school, and so terrified the boys during the few remaining days of the half-year, that they scarcely dared breathe a word to one another on the subject. Joyce and Dalison, in particular, were more quiet and subdued in their demeanour than they had ever been during the whole of their career at Martin's Green ; and their last week there was one of unusual peace and quiet to their schoolfellows.

The school broke up at last, and they departed with the rest, unaccused by any—unsuspected by any of the masters, excepting Mr. Winter, who felt that his suspicions were

of too vague a character to allow of his giving them expression.

It has been already intimated that Arthur's mother and guardian were immediately applied to; but Mr. Winter, after much inquiry, found that the guardian had died within the last few weeks, and that the mother had left England, having gone no one knew whither. After the lapse of several months, a reply was received to a letter written to Mrs. Johnstone, offering no explanation, but simply requesting that the matter might be allowed to drop, as it could tend to no good purpose to pursue it further. No elucidation of the mystery was ever received by Dr. Brooksbank, or any of his colleagues at Brunswick House. But the story was handed down by oral tradition from generation to generation of boys; receiving, at every transmission, new embellishments and distortions, until, for anything I know, it may have reached our own day. But if so, I will answer for it that those who remembered the actual occurrence, will scarcely recognise a feature of it.

As for Frank Trevor, he was laid up the next day with a sharp attack of illness, and was confined for several days to the house. He was deeply hurt at the injustice he had received, and did not make sufficient allowance for Dr. Brooksbank's not unnatural mistake. Mr. Winter was not there to help him; and his father, who had learned that he was ill, and knew that there remained but a few days of the half-year, readily assented to his request, and removed him home.

Joyce and Dalison went to the college at Addiscombe, Trevor to Haileybury, so that the schoolfellows did not meet again. Frank was greatly moved by the disappearance of the little boy who had been the victim of such unprovoked unkindness, and who had evinced for himself, in his strange and uncouth fashion, a sentiment of gratitude and affection. He resolved that he would always wear the gold chain and ornament; which Arthur must have placed round his neck when he parted from him, and which might have been, for all he could tell, one of the last acts of his unhappy

life. This resolution he persisted in, all his life afterwards.

And now I think I hear my readers complaining that this is not only a very lame, but a very objectionable conclusion to the story. Here is a poor little boy hunted and tortured, until he is driven to desperation ; and yet no redress is given him, and no punishment overtakes his persecutors. And worse than this, here is a boy who manfully stood up and suffered in his behalf, who not only fails to obtain the credit he justly deserved, but even quits the scene under the imputation of having committed the very offence which he had exerted himself so manfully to prevent others from committing.

Well, good reader, and even if this were so, would it be very unlike what we often see passing in this world around us ?

Would Frank Trevor have any great reason to complain, or Dalison and Joyce to exult ? Would the one have missed his reward, or the others escaped their punishment, supposing that our tale ended here ? No thoughtful-

minded man would say so. Frank's true recompense consisted in the mastery he had gained over himself; in the successful discipline of his spirit in this his first passage of arms with evil, which had made him stronger to meet the future trials of life. What was the prize he had missed, or the praise of his masters, compared with this? And his two schoolfellows—had they really escaped punishment? No, far from it. Better for them a hundred times to have been exposed and subject to the severest penaltics, than to have done the wrong they did, and escaped with seeming impunity. Justice is ever done, and punishment exacted to the utmost, though those who see the wrong are not always permitted to witness the retribution. But if you will bestow your patience on me for one chapter more, I will digress from the regular order of my narrative, in order to show you that, even regarding the question from your point of view, your strictures are misapplied.

CHAPTER VI.

IN the summer of 1824, some seven or eight years after the occurrences related in the last chapter, the Governor-General of India, Lord Amherst, had occasion to send one of his secretaries on a confidential mission to the British Resident at Delhi. Troubles had broken out among the Mahrattas, a wild fierce race, who had never wholly succumbed to European ascendancy; and it was feared that a sanguinary war would be the result. Buldeo Singh, who had been for many years the faithful ally of England, had recently died, leaving a son too young to assume the reins of government; and the brother of the late Rajah, Doorjun Saul, had usurped the throne. The English authorities had shown some symptoms of vacillation in their dealings with him. These, as might have been foreseen, had

encouraged him to assume a more defiant tone than he would otherwise have ventured on; and it was now felt that there was no course open to them but to despatch a large military force to Bhurtpore, and reduce him to submission.

Francis Trevor, who had arrived some five years previously in India, accompanied the secretary on his mission; and together they travelled with all the speed and secrecy which it was possible to secure in those days, arriving at Agra even earlier than the Governor-General had anticipated. Here Trevor and his principal parted company—the latter proceeding with the same rapidity as before to Delhi, the former accompanying a squadron of the —th regiment of native cavalry, which had been for some time quartered at Agra, and were now ordered to march without the delay of an hour on Bhurt-pore. Trevor was greatly surprised, more surprised than pleased, at recognizing in the subaltern officers commanding the detachment, his old schoolfellows, Joyce and Dalison.

They had proceeded to Addiscombe at the end of the half-year following Arthur Johnstone's disappearance, and in process of time had obtained their commissions in the Company's service. It will readily be believed that neither party was very anxious to renew an intimacy, the termination of which had been attended by circumstances so unwelcome; nor was Trevor the more inclined to such a course by the reports he received at Agra of his former schoolfellows. However, as they must inevitably be fellow-travellers for the next few days, and moreover would have no other persons with whom they could exchange even the most ordinary conversation, they were obliged to assume a virtue if they had it not, and affect a show of mutual cordiality.

Thus they proceeded for the first three days; on the last of which the reconnoitring parties, which from time to time they sent out, began to bring in some doubtful and even alarming rumours. They were advancing into the Mahratta country, and symptoms of

its disturbed condition began everywhere to show themselves. Sometimes they came on a village which had been sacked, and the bodies of the inhabitants, killed or wounded, lay in all directions by the roadside. From some of the survivors they learned that the leader of the foray in which they had fallen was one Ahmed Singh, Rajah of Jesselpore; who had warmly espoused the faction of Doorjun Saul, and had made a descent on the villages which refused to recognise his supremacy. It was added, that he had with him a large cavalry force, much superior in numbers to that commanded by Joyce and Dalison; but it was generally believed that hearing of the approach of the European troops, he had withdrawn beyond the Sutlej.

“That is lucky,” observed Joyce when the non-commissioned officer had finished his report. “We have heard plenty of our friend Ahmed during our stay at Agra, and I have no fancy to encounter his troopers with such a handful of fellows as we have got with us.”

"No," said Dalison, "more especially as we have to pass the Dhoondah. I am half inclined to remain here until Warren comes up. These Mahrattas are as wily as serpents, and very likely Ahmed has only pretended to retire, in order to come upon us unawares to-morrow."

"Is the Dhoondah pass very dangerous?" asked Trevor.

"Dangerous? I believe you," replied Dalison. "The rocks are two hundred feet high on each side in some places, and the opening scarcely thirty feet wide. A lot of old women might settle the whole of us if they knew how to go to work. What were your instructions, Joyce? Have you any discretion as to stopping or going on?"

"Well, I am afraid not," replied Joyce, consulting the written memorandum given him by the commandant at Agra. "He says, 'Press on with all possible speed, and without the delay of an hour.' You see, if we knew that Ahmed was in possession of the passes, it would be a different thing. It would be

sheer madness, and certain sacrifice of all lives, to go on then. But you have heard that our fellows report that the enemy has fallen back, and the pass is open."

"You must push on at all risks," said Trevor. "I know it is of the utmost importance, and if I may venture to advise, we had better move instantly, so as to pass the defile before nightfall. If Ahmed Singh has retired, the pass will of course be open now; but as soon as he learns the smallness of our force, is he not pretty sure to return?"

"True," said Dalison, "we had better set out at once. Sergeant, give orders to march in half an hour; meanwhile send the corporal's guard forward to reconnoitre the pass."

They were soon in the saddle again, and an hour or two's steady riding brought them to the entrance of the ravine. Here they were met by one of the soldiers of the guard, who had been sent forward with the intelligence that the advanced party had traversed

the whole of the defile without encountering the slightest opposition. Satisfied with this assurance Joyce, by Dalison's advice, ordered an immediate advance, as rapid as the nature of the ground would permit. Had he scrutinised the faces of some of his veteran troopers, he would have read on them an expression which might have induced him to pause; but Dalison, notwithstanding his natural sagacity, was a haughty and rather indolent officer, who, like many of his countrymen, held the natives in too much contempt to inquire what they might say or think.

His omission proved as fatal as it has done on subsequent occasions. They had reached the narrowest gorge of the ravine without interruption, when on a sudden a shout was heard from the precipice above them; and the next moment a huge mass of earth, mingled with stone and timber, fell directly in the path, which it blocked up so as to present for the moment an impassable obstacle. At the same instant a soldier came galloping up to announce that a strong body

of Mahrattas were attacking them in the rear. It was evident that they were caught in a trap ; and the next minute the fact was still more clearly evidenced by the appearance of sharp-shooters, half concealed in the crevices of the rocks above, whose fire emptied saddle after saddle without the least possibility of retaliation. It was impracticable alike to advance or retreat ; and the cry for quarter, which was raised as soon as the hopelessness of the situation became apparent, was sternly disregarded. At length the few who still survived unhurt, among whom Trevor and the two officers were included, succeeded in surmounting, by desperate efforts, the mass of ruin by which the road had been barricaded, and galloped in safety through the remainder of the defile.

But they had little reason to congratulate themselves on their escape. As they emerged from the pass, they found themselves in the midst of a troop of irregular horse—the vanguard, as they learned, of Ahmed's army—and would have been instantly cut down, but

that the epaulettes of the officers, and still more the dress and appearance of Trevor, marked them out as persons of distinction. The officer in command ordered them to be instantly disarmed and secured in close custody, until the Rajah himself should come up. He accompanied this act of lenity, however, with an assurance, that he only thereby delayed their execution for a few hours, as his chief had sworn to spare no Europeans who might fall into his power, and it was an oath which he had never broken. With this comfortable assurance he left them in charge of a ferocious-looking Mahratta, who kept guard over them through the night with a drawn scimitar in his hand, which he occasionally brandished over their heads with a significant gesture, implying the extreme pleasure with which he would, and probably should, employ it upon them.

The night passed as cheerlessly as might have been expected. All three had given up any hope of escape or deliverance. Ahmed Singh was well known throughout the whole

surrounding district for the merciless severity with which he put to death every European, and particularly every Englishman, that fell into his hands. A price had in consequence been set upon his head, the knowledge of which circumstance added desperation to his natural ferocity. It was impossible to expect assistance from the troops advancing from Agra. Occupied as the defile now was by a strong military power, it could not be forced, at least not without repeated efforts, which would cause protracted delay, and a terrible sacrifice of life. A few hours must inevitably place their lives at the mercy of the Mahratta Rajah ; and that they felt was equivalent to the sentence of immediate death.

Early in the morning they were roused from the stupor, rather than sleep, into which they had fallen, by the arrival of a messenger from the Rajah, requiring them to be brought into his presence. He had come up, they learned, from the Sutlej, and was now encamped at a few miles' distance. It is not easy at any time to daunt English officers ; nevertheless,

the strange and savage appearance of their captors, and the looks of undisguised hatred which every eye expressed which rested upon theirs, was enough to strike terror into the bravest bosom. On reaching the outskirts of the camp, they were met by the Rajah's body-guard, with drawn scimitars, who conducted them to his presence.

Ahmed Singh was leaning against the pillar of the tent, engaged in council with his officers, when the prisoners were introduced. Even at that trying moment, Trevor could not help being struck with his appearance, which seemed the perfect impersonation of an Eastern robber. He was evidently in the prime of youth, scarcely more it seemed than twenty years of age, but had the brow and glance of a man of forty. His tall, martial figure was clad in the armour with which Indian artists of late years have made us so familiar, and the light, flexible ring mail seemed to fit him, as the skin of the panther does the animal to which it belongs. Per-

ceiving their entrance, he broke off the conversation by which he had been engrossed, and gave an order, in his own language, to the guards to bring the prisoners forward, when, seating himself on the pile of cushions spread for him, he contemplated them with a stern and haughty glance, and inquired in very intelligible English, which was the leader of the party.

Joyce replying that he was the senior officer present, the Rajah proceeded to put to him a string of questions, demanding the number of soldiers under his own command, and of those now on their march from Agra; the place on which they had been directed to move; and the purpose for which the movement was made. Observing Joyce falter and hesitate, he interrupted him with a fierce gesture and exclamation.

“ Beware ! dog of a Feringhi, that you palter not with me. I never loved your race; and it needs but a motion of my hand, and your head will roll on the floor of this tent. Ha ! ” he muttered in a low tone to himself,

“where can I have seen that face? It seems familiar to me, yet I have never encountered an officer of his regiment before! It must be fancy. Tell me once more,” he resumed in a louder tone, “the precise number of men composing your regiment, and of the troop under your command.”

Notwithstanding the threat, which was evidently no idle one, Joyce still hesitated. He was aware that his life would be instantly forfeited if he should refuse to answer the questions put to him, or should be detected in the slightest mis-statement; nor would there be any security that, even should he answer all that was asked of him correctly, the wily savage would not order his execution as soon as he had ascertained what he had required. But he was aware also, that he was in possession of information of which the Rajah knew nothing, and in exchange for which he would willingly give him his life and liberty, if he could only make the bargain with him.

This would be treason no doubt, but his life

was at stake, and Joyce was not the man—as the reader knows, he had not been the boy—to sacrifice himself to a sense of honour. Besides, he argued that the Rajah would be sure to obtain the information from Dalison, if not from himself; so that the interests of the English government would suffer quite as much, even if he remained silent. Addressing his questioner therefore, in his own language, with which Joyce had some slight acquaintance, he begged the Rajah to defer his inquiries until he could grant him a private interview; when he had secret intelligence for his ear of the utmost consequence, which he would impart on condition of his life being spared.

Ahmed Singh smiled with bitter scorn, and desired two of his guards to convey Joyce into an adjoining tent, and there wait his arrival. Then motioning to the others, he caused Trevor to be placed before him, and addressed to him the same questions which he had previously put to Joyce.

“I am a civilian,” replied Trevor calmly,

“and do not know the numbers of the forces under the English general, nor the order of their march.”

“A civilian, do you say? are you attached to the mission of the envoy despatched to Delhi?”

“Yes,” replied Trevor.

“Then perhaps you are in possession of the same information which the dog from whom I have just parted has offered me in exchange for his life. If so, I will more willingly make the bargain with you than with him. I like your face, as well as I can like that of a Feringhi; but his is, for some cause, odious to me. I would rather spare you than him, if I must spare one.”

“Whatever information I may possess,” replied Frank, in the same tone as before, “is the secret of my sovereign and my country. It would be the act of a traitor to divulge it.”

“Ha, you refuse!” exclaimed the Rajah. “Guards, your scimitars! Yet stay! he may have some secret instructions con-

cealed about his person. Tear open his dress, and search."

The guards obeyed, and stripping off the prisoner's upper coat proceeded carefully to examine its contents, and afterwards the other articles of his clothing. Presently their researches brought to light a chain hung round his neck, to which a gold ornament of a remarkable shape and fashion was attached. As the eye of Ahmed, who was closely observant of all that passed, lit on this object, he uttered a sudden exclamation of surprise.

"Hold!" he cried, "and hand hither the piece of gold which the prisoner wears attached to that chain. By the sword of the Prophet, it is the same! Ho, Feringhi, tell me your name, and whence you obtained this ornament."

"It was given me, or rather left in my charge, by a schoolfellow, a countryman I believe of your own, years ago, in England."

"And your name?" said his questioner.

"Is Francis Trevor."

"Release him," said the Rajah, "and give

him his robe again. We march in a quarter of an hour for Bhurtpore. Provide a horse for the Feringhi, and treat him with all possible honour. He will ride by my side, and share my tent this evening. For the other two, they remain your prisoners. See they escape not, or your lives will answer for theirs. Now leave us, let all be in readiness for departure. Trevor," he added, turning to the Englishman, who, divided between astonishment at the strange scene, and thankfulness at his un hoped for escape, knew not how to express the feelings which were struggling for utterance, "look not so amazed. I am the schoolfellow who hung round your neck the piece of gold which has saved your life. You cannot have forgotten Arthur Johnstone?"

During the march to Bhurtpore there was ample leisure for Trevor to hear the still stranger sequel of the strange story, which the reader has already perused in the earlier chapters of this narrative. Arthur Johnstone was, it appeared, the only son of Jessel Singh,

a Mahratta chief who had waged incessant warfare with the British government for more than twenty years ; and who, though disastrously defeated by Lord Lake, and reduced to a condition little better than that of a robber, had contrived to maintain his independence. Notwithstanding that, like all Mussulmen of high rank, he had several wives, there was no male heir to his throne, until it chanced that in one of his numerous inroads on the Company's territory, an English lady and her daughter, named Johnstone, fell into his hands. He became deeply enamoured of the latter, and partly by threats, partly by persuasion, prevailed on her to become his wife. She bore him the only son that was ever born to his house, and was thenceforth regarded by Jessel Singh with even greater honour and affection than before. Notwithstanding this, the lady, who was fickle and self-willed, began to grow weary, after a time, of the barbaric splendour and sudden vicissitudes of fortune between which her life alternated. Seizing the opportunity of the

Rajah's lengthened absence on a marauding expedition, she fled to the sea coast and embarked for England, taking with her her son and a large amount of property in gold and jewels. The Rajah, on his return to Jessel-pore, was bitterly incensed at his wife's treachery. For herself, he swore that not only would he never again permit her to enter his presence, but he would revenge her perfidy on all her countrymen who might fall into his hands. But his son he resolved to recover, if it should be possible for him to do so. He accordingly despatched a European servant of his wife, who had remained faithful to his service, with instructions to follow and discover the retreat of the fugitives in England, and having ascertained this, at once to communicate it to him.

The servant reached England about two months after Arthur had been consigned to Dr. Brooksbank's school; and by dint of unremitting inquiries and a profuse expenditure of money, succeeded in discovering the place of his young master's residence. He was on the point of conveying the intelligence of his

success, as he had been instructed to do, when a strange chance threw the boy himself into his power.

"You remember," said the Rajah at this point of the narrative, as he rode by Trevor's side through a defile, not unlike the one which had so nearly proved fatal to him on the previous day—"you remember, I doubt not, that when I would not consent to offer sacrifice, even in sport, to the accursed idol—whom every true follower of the prophet accounts to be one and the same with Zatanai himself—they narrowly escaped the retribution which I had prepared for them, and ran like frightened sheep from the chamber, leaving you and me alone in it. I resolved at once that I would stay no longer to be the object of their feeble malignity; but I would not go without bidding you farewell, who alone had been my steadfast friend. But you, however, were too weak and faint to understand me, and I could not delay. I could but hang the small gold ornament, which I had brought with me from Jesselpore, round your neck, and then make my escape as quickly as I could, taking with

me the poor reptile, who would surely have been the subject of their cruelty, had I left it behind. I lowered myself from the window, and was hurrying down to the river side, to replace the snake in the spot whence I had taken it, when, to our mutual astonishment, I encountered the Feringhi servant whom my father had sent in search of me. A hasty explanation followed. We left England a few days afterwards, and returned to India ; visiting my mother on the way, in an obscure spot to which she had retired for fear of discovery, but which she had previously disclosed to me. Threatened by my companion with exposure and punishment, she readily agreed to give me up to my father, and check all inquiries respecting me.

“Arrived in Jesselpore, my father received me with open arms, and under his teaching I grew up a warrior and a chief. Like him, I have avenged the wrongs which my race has sustained from the Feringhies with my sword. Blame me not. You cannot feel as I do—as the descendant of a race of conquerors feels towards the only nation who

have crushed and trampled them. Now tell me, on the honour of a Feringhi gentleman, are your companions the men I suspect?"

"They are your old schoolfellows," said Trevor, faltering. "Think how young they were when they injured and distressed you. You will not revenge on the man the faults of the boy?"

Ahmed made no answer. The towers of Bhurtpore were now in sight, and he rode forward to give the necessary instructions to his officers before entering its gates.

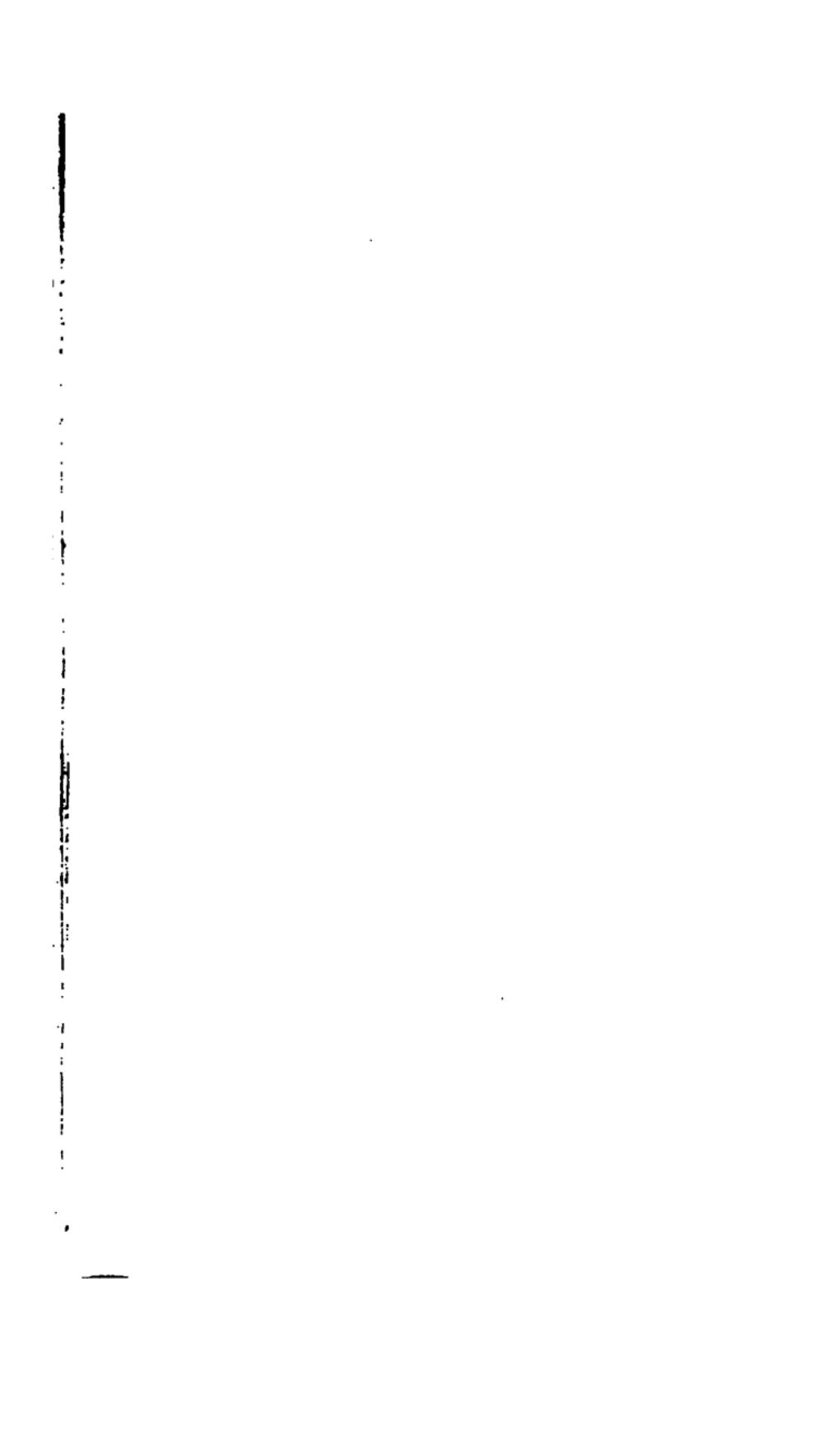
On the following day Francis Trevor, loaded with rich presents, and escorted by a troop of cavalry bearing a flag of truce, was despatched to Delhi, where he was received by his friends, who had been informed of the defeat and capture of Joyce's troop, with little less surprise than would have been felt if he had risen from the dead. While taking his leave of the Rajah, he again endeavoured to obtain some promise of mercy for his companions; but his entreaties produced no effect beyond a stern frown and ominous silence. A like attempt was make by the resident at

Delhi, who sent an officer with an offer to exchange some prisoners of rank who had fallen into his hands for Dalison and Joyce; but to this overture also no answer was returned.

A few months afterwards the fortress of Bhurtpore was assaulted and captured, with terrible slaughter, by the British troops, under Lord Combermere; and Ahmed Singh, together with nearly the whole of the force immediately under his command, perished in the explosion of a mine. After the fall of the fortress, Trevor, who had accompanied the army for that special purpose, made a most careful examination of the dungeons it contained, and also instituted every possible inquiry, publicly proclaiming his readiness to pay a large sum to any one who would give him authentic information as to the fate of his former schoolfellows. But his efforts proved wholly fruitless for many years. At last, when he was passed middle age, and had risen to a high rank in the Company's service, an old man in the attire of a travelling derveesh presented himself one day at his

private house, and, drawing from under his cloak the long-forgotten proclamation, asked the Sahib if he was willing to make good the offer it contained. Sir Francis Trevor consented, on condition of receiving sufficient proof of the accuracy of his statements; and the Mahratta then produced a watch and a letter-case, engraved with the names of the ill-fated officers. Sir Francis, whom I met a few years afterwards on his return to England, told me that the derveesh had detailed to him with the most immovable calmness the particulars of their death, but, he added, they were of a nature too shocking to allow of his communicating them to others.

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